

HEARTS OF IRON III



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STRATEGY GUIDE

WHY A STRATEGY GUIDE?

Hearts of Iron III is designed primarily as a wargame, with the emphasis on combat and military units. However, any student of history will tell you there are non-combat aspects to war which are often more important than even the combat itself. In HOI 3, these aspects are represented through your ability to direct your economy, to manage your resources, to pursue diplomatic objectives, set research priorities, etc. It's all done with the goal of providing a realistic representation of the challenges and elements faced by the real-life commanders from the World War II era.

So, there are two reasons why a Strategy Guide will be useful. First, the Hearts of Iron franchise has taken a great leap forward with this largely re-designed third installment. Indeed, HOI 3 is an ambitious project – one game reviewer said, “This feels more like HOI 4!” – but at the same time, it incorporates so many advances in automation and user friendliness that you don't have to face everything at once. You can learn at your own pace. But you will certainly benefit from a guide to its complicated functions. Think of this Strategy Guide as a companion for, and a supplement to, the existing Manual and In-Game Tutorials.

Secondly, few HOI 3 players will be professional strategists. One of the advantages of playing a game that is so realistic – a “war simulator” – is that many of the strategies and tactics you must use in the game are real-life strategies and tactics. Most of what I will teach here is not gamey “how to beat the game” tricks, using quirks in game mechanics to make you superior to other, less experienced gamers. For the most part, the strategies I'm going to show you are taught at army staff colleges around the world. I'm just showing you how to use these strategies to your advantage within the framework of the game.

Certainly, there will be opportunities for players that only exist for those who ignore historical realities. Some of these fall within the realm of legitimate alternative history – the exploration of “what might have been.” Others may be considered manipulations of the game engine, and therefore called “gamey.” This guide will leave “gamey strategies” to clever players who will soon begin to reveal those strategies on the Paradox Forum.

Partly, my concentration on the application of real-life strategy is because Paradox does not necessarily endorse “gamey” strategies – in fact, most of them get “fixed” in later patches. The second reason is more practical. Soon after the release of Hearts of Iron 3, some players will begin doing mathematical analyses of the facts and figures of HOI 3, and will determine strategies based on the mathematics. Some of these strategies will make use of game quirks to win in unrealistic ways,

and others will just highlight common sense. Either may be valuable to some players.

However, this guide does not focus very heavily on hard figures because as I write this guide those figures are still changing from one pre-release beta version to the next. Once the game is released, the “release-day patch” is likely to remain the standard for weeks or months, and so it's possible to perform analyses which will be correct until a new patch comes out. I don't have that power, and so I cannot teach those things.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

If my purpose is to tell you how best to play the game, and enjoy it, then there's one **most important thing** I have to tell you: you **must** visit the Paradox Forum and download the latest software patch!

As I've already mentioned, the game will continue to change up to the point of its first shipments and store sales. In fact, it will continue to change, even beyond that time. Paradox has a well-earned reputation for continued patch support for its games months, and even years, after their release.

In fact, much of the most important work on a Paradox game takes place in post-release, when countless actual players report bugs and otherwise (good to begin with) contribute to the process of improving the game by explaining what they think needs to change, and why.

If it's August 2009, and you're one of the first gamers to purchase and enjoy HOI 3, your first step will be to download and install the “release patch,” which will be available at the Paradox Forum. This will fix any little, niggling strangeness that remained when the game CDs were coded. The best strategy for perpetuating your enjoyment of HOI 3 is to keep your patches updated, checking back regularly to make sure you have the latest patch which will fix increasingly more things as time goes on. The only caution I can offer is that your savegames may or may not survive a new patch. That's another thing you should ask, first, on the Paradox Forum, because other players will quickly explain whether or not they can continue playing their old savegames.

If you've come late to the game, it's still important for you to check the Forum and download the latest patch, because if HOI 3 was good when it was first released, it's guaranteed to be even better and more refined weeks, months, and even years later. I have been playing Paradox games since the first Hearts of Iron game came out in 2002, and my experience has been clear: Paradox Interactive puts more energy than anyone I've ever seen into keeping their products updated, their bugs fixed, and in listening to their fans on the Forum about what improvements they want to see.

HOW HOI 3 HAS CHANGED

The original Hearts of Iron came out in 2002. Its sequel was produced in 2005, and two expansions were released in 2006 and 2007. Paradox has learned from each new release, and continues to improve upon their product.

There are many changes and improvements in HOI 3, most of which are discussed later in this guide. However, the most substantial changes have to do with the number of provinces, and the changes to “scaling” that causes, and also the degree to which historical scripting drives the game. HOI 2 was very tightly scripted to make sure historical events happened, either forcing the player into one or more options, or sometimes causing things to seem unrealistic because those events were “out-of-place” in the ahistorical context. HOI 2 allowed a more freeform exploration of ahistorical possibilities, but also admitted some very strange results because it was inflexible. HOI 3 is more of a simulation of World War II and the types of events we should expect within context, according to the way your choices change things.

For instance, HOI 3 does not pre-determine the start date of wars. This means that World War II in Europe could start in May, instead of September, or could even happen in 1938 or 1940. This means that every country – aggressive countries, or western democracies – may have the opportunity to build up over time. On the other hand, it’s also possible that you will not have as much time as you expected. It’s also impossible to predict with certainty when things like the Spanish Civil War will start, or even if they will start at all!

In terms of the scaling concepts, and the way HOI 3 opens up an

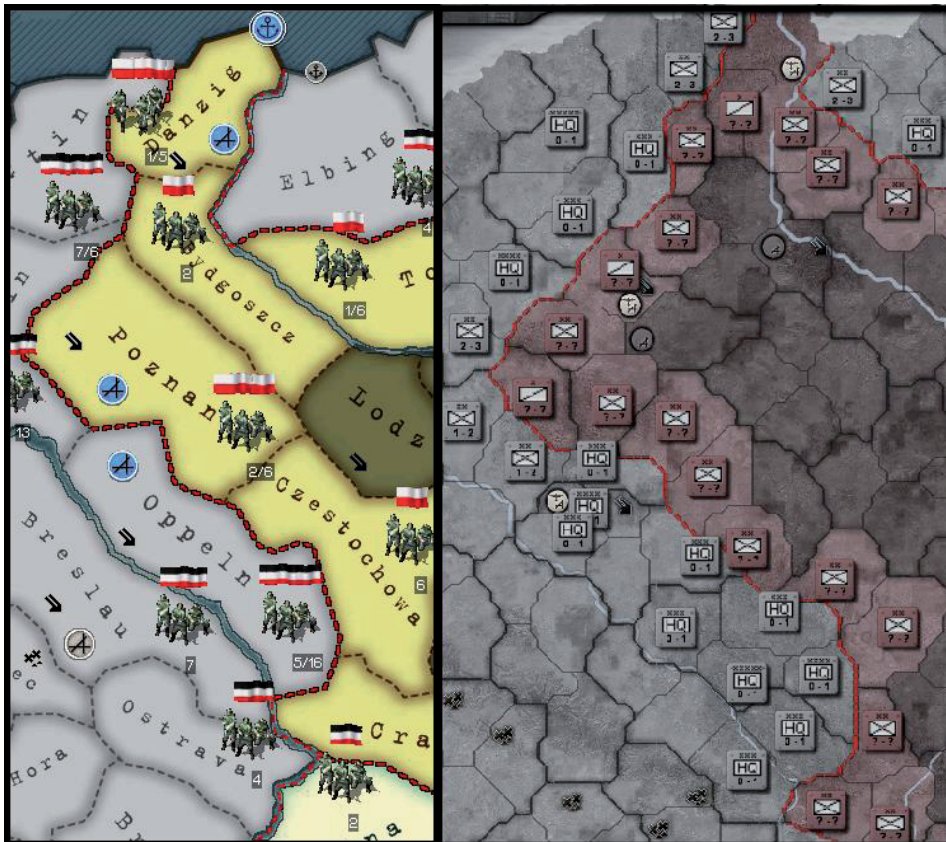
entirely “new frontier” in strategic battlefield gameplay, this really is an entirely new game. The flexibility offered by the increased number of provinces is enormous! It’s taking a giant leap from a hyper-strategic game into something a lot more tactical – in other words, something where the player has a lot more control over the choices and tactics used by individual divisions (but only if you want that level of control).

In HOI 2, the western border between Germany and Poland was five provinces. You could either attack them all at once, or you could attack one and hope to slip behind one of the defenders. You could choose to attack the province with two divisions, or the one with six divisions, or the one with eight divisions.

In HOI 3, that border has three times as many provinces, and you have a lot more control over which divisions you attack, and which ones you can try to slip behind. No longer are you forced to perform a costly “frontal assault” – now you can make pinpoint attacks, and attempt to exploit the breakthrough and surround the enemy!

Likewise, HOI 3 has changed the nature of combat on the Eastern Front, because the border with the USSR in 1941 is not just 10 provinces long. Now it’s 21 provinces, and there are places along the front where you can choose just one division to directly attack. Of course, this means the other divisions are hanging around nearby and can hit you along your flanks. The number of provinces in HOI 3 completely revolutionizes the means and methods of combat, which is why it’s a lot more important to understand true military strategy now.

The increased scale of HOI 3 does not just offer increased battlefield fluidity, meaning the ability to envelop and encircle the enemy, but it also



requires the player to adjust his unit management accordingly. We will go into methods of doing this, later on.

UPDATES & ERRATA FROM THE MANUAL

There have been some changes since the Manual was written, and things that may not have been explained fully. These are detailed in the readme.txt file, but I'll also go over them here.

A1.1 – Some of the other graphics choices from the Main Menu Options are whether you want to use Counters or Sprites (discussed in A2.3), and whether you want to use “Advanced Water,” which is basically how realistic (and graphically intensive) you want the ocean’s water to look. Set this to off if your computer’s display of the game is slow.

A2.4 – Now the easiest on-screen method of pausing is to click on the date, which will toggle pause on and off.

A3.4, C2.5 – When you produce and deploy new IC, Infrastructure, or various other Installations, they may take a few days to gradually come into being. After that time, you will see its effects represented in your statistics.

C2.1 – Each successive product in a serial build is a new product, and so it will reflect any changes in technology which might have made those units cheaper. In other words, you are not locking in a more expensive cost by using serial build.

C4.0 – Just to clarify, there is a “Mobilize” button at the bottom right of the Political Interface which will mobilize your military, and add the last step of mobilization to your reserve units. The other mobilization steps are controlled through the Laws section of the Political Interface, at the bottom left of the same screen.

C5.0 – When newly constructed units are ready for deployment, they may be either assigned to an existing unit, or placed directly into a valid location in your home country. These valid locations will show as green when you click the deploy alert in the upper left of your screen.

D6.1 – Any member of a faction may influence another nation toward their faction, but only the leader of a faction may invite non-member countries to join. Likewise, any country wishing to join a faction must ask the leader of that faction.

E4.1 – Using units in combat will build your practical knowledge in related areas.

F4.0 – You are automatically de-mobilized when you are at peace, unless you had previously mobilized while at peace – then you must manually decide to de-mobilize.

F5.2 – Allied troop commitment impacts your Strategic Warfare score, not your chance for breaking directly, although breaking is partly dependent upon your Strategic Warfare score.

H4.1 – There’s a higher supply tax for provinces you control but do not own (i.e. occupied land).

H8.0 As noted in B3.0, it is the buyer of a resource on the world market who must transport those goods on his own transport ships if the goods must be transported overseas.

H8.0 – You can only attach escorts to convoys while you’re at war. Otherwise they sit in a pool, waiting.

J1.3 – If you’re trying to select all the air or naval units in a province, you can draw a select box (or “dragbox”) around just the airbase, or just the naval base. If the province is too small to select just the base, first select any of the types of units you’re wanting to select, and then use the select box. It should select only the air or naval units.

J5.1 – An hourglass icon in the land unit interface will show if a unit is under “combat delay,” meaning it’s recently been attacking, and it must wait to attack again. A tooltip will show how long it must wait.

J5.1 – When you order a land unit to move, its movement is indicated on the Land Unit Interface with a green arrow in two locations. If you hover your mouse cursor over the arrow, a tooltip will tell you to which adjacent province it’s moving, and when it’s due to arrive there. It won’t tell you its final destination. A similar indicator in the top left of the interface will indicate other things, such as if the unit is under attack.

J5.1, J6.2, J7.2 – Disbanding a unit will keep you from having to pay to supply and reinforce that unit, and it will also return its current manpower strength to the pool. The IC you spent to build it will not be restored, though.

J5.1, J6.2, J7.2 – In each unit interface (land, air & naval) you may click on the name of the unit to change the name of the unit. When you click on it, a cursor will appear, and you can type a new name.

J5.2 – Some brigades may have a combat width wider than 1.

J5.8 – Reserves use less consumer goods during peacetime, proportional to their strength, so their need will go up as you change your laws to mobilize for war.

J7.5 – A CAG whose carrier enters combat is automatically assumed to be actively defending the carrier.

K3.0 – Panzer Leader trait adds his combined arms bonus on top of any existing combined arms bonus.

K4.0 – Creating Theatres - Theatre changes will not be automatic for the player, as they may disrupt your plans. Instead you can force updates from the production interface.

K4.5 – Defensive stance may allow some offensive moves against targets of opportunity, however the Prepare stance will not allow any offensive moves.

L2.0 – Whole divisions enter combat, and if a division has support brigades they are considered in combat, not in the reserve.

L4.3 – Shattered units now reappear at their theatre HQ, not at the capital.

L5.6 – A unit may dig in by 2% per day, for a maximum of 10 days.

CHOICES, CHOICES...

The level of difficulty you use will help determine how hard it will be for you to win. Many players will want to start at a lesser difficulty until they get used to the game, and then can play on normal or hard in later games.

On Easy difficulty, for instance, the player will have advantages in handling revolt risk, and significant advantages in acquiring manpower, IC, resources, repairing ships and transporting supplies. The enemy (the AI) will play normally, without advantages or disadvantages. This will make it easier for you to win. Very Easy will make it even easier for you to win.

At Very Hard difficulty, the enemy (the AI) will have significant advantages in manpower, resources, IC, base efficiencies and supply throughput, whereas you will have significant disadvantages in return – it really stacks things against you, making for a much harder game, which many people enjoy.

In HOI 3, as in past games, you’ve had the option of using either “sprites” (little tanks or men to visually represent the units), or “counters” (colored squares with symbols & writing to explain more about the unit), and there are always camps of followers for each. Honestly, I haven’t been a “counters” guy, myself – not since the old board wargames which used



cardboard counters. But I must strongly advise you to use counters in HOI 3 (at least until you're used to the game). The counters provide so much information about your units, and the enemy's units, that it will make it harder to play without.

If you do decide to use sprites, the tooltips should help you sort things out. But you will still need to click on your units often and pull up the unit interface in order to see valuable information.

Most of your other choices will have to do with your graphics. If you have an older computer, or one that is not optimized for game playing, you may want to turn off some of these extra features, like trees and realistic ("advanced") water, so they do not tie up your computer's processor or graphics cards, and the game will play more smoothly.

AUTOMATION & EASE

HOI 3 is designed so that, if you so desire, you can allow the computer's Artificial Intelligence (AI) to run everything for you, while you just make the major decisions. Your style of play will determine whether this is a useful tool for you, or if you would prefer to make your own decisions. You can determine your favored degree of micromanagement.

You can set your major management interfaces to manage themselves (AI control). By setting the Diplomacy Interface to automatic, for instance, it will set up trades for you according to your needs, and save you the trouble of having to worry about it. The interfaces you will most likely want to retain control of are Production and Technology, because that's where you make choices about what technologies and military units you want to have to fight your war. On the other hand, if you'd rather just fight with whatever the computer gives you to fight with, you're more than welcome to set all these interfaces to automatic.

The Theatre and HQ command system designed for HOI 3 will help you to not be overwhelmed by all the lower-level decisions such as which divisions to attack where exactly. Instead, you can provide a corps, or an army group, or even a whole theatre with general instructions, and the AI will control these units according to the guidelines you've given. See the Headquarters section for more information about managing your units with these tools.

It will also make it easier if you understand that most of the lists of figures, wherever you see them (Diplomacy country list, Intelligence country list, statistics information, etc.), will be sortable. The interface lists, furthermore, have additional options that allow you to only look at neighbors, at members of certain factions, or at countries on certain continents, etc.

TIME AND DATE

Keep an eye on the clock, and on the date. The time of day is important, but remember the time on the game clock is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT or Zulu), not your local time. Night comes at different clock hours around the world. This is important to keep in mind as you play.

Each game "turn" is one hour, but because units don't take turns moving (they're all moving at the same time, if they're moving at all), HOI 3 is **not** "turn based." It's just a method of keeping track of time, and it's important to recognize that time is passing.

The date may also be important, as summer turns to fall, turns to winter, etc. The weather will generally be determined by the season, and attrition of your units may also depend on the time of year, because extremes of hot and cold can make things tough on your troops.

MESSAGE SETTINGS

There is a great deal of information the game can provide to you, much of which will help you in understanding what's going on. However, too much information can be more distracting than it is helpful, and so you need to decide for yourself what information you need to know about. The message settings options allow you to control this in several ways.

If you ask to be informed of everything from every country, you'll spend more time closing windows than playing the game. If you turn everything off, important things will happen without your knowledge, and you'll be unable to make well-informed decisions. A careful balance needs to be struck.

Rather than go through the long list of options and deciding on each one, the easiest option may be to set all of them to inform you with a popup window, and then you can right-click on that window to hide those messages if they become too distracting. This allows you to see all the types of message in context before you decide how they should be handled. By a couple weeks into the game, you should have the messages pared down to a manageable level.

Another way of setting these requires a little bit of coding, and is described in the Modding section at the end of the Strategy Guide. This procedure involves editing the message settings in a text file, then re-saving it. It must be done carefully, though, so read the cautions in the modding section before you do this.

DON'T PANIC!

From time to time, you will see a "**Don't Panic!**" header, which will provide tips as to how you can use built-in player aids, special organizational methods or certain ways of looking at things to keep from being overwhelmed by the complexity of the game.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

The first things you will do in any game, especially if you start in 1936, the first phase of your game will be setting up your country the way you want it, researching the techs you need, and building the units you need. All of this is best done after a general evaluation of your country and its strategic situation within the game. The next chapter will explain how to look at your country and its environment critically. The next chapter will explain how to set up your laws and ministers the way you want them, and prepare your economy for the coming conflict. The next two chapters will talk about how to set your research and production priorities. Other chapters will lead on from there into several subjects of a more military character.

How you act in each of these areas will all be driven by your ultimate goals. HOI 3 is designed in such a way that you can set your own goals – to be very specific, or to be entirely freeform and reactive to the world situation as it's presented to you.

If you think it would be useful for you, there is a Quickstart Guide available for those people who have registered their game on the Paradox Forum (which you have probably already done in order to have access to this Strategy Guide). If you can't find it, ask for assistance on the Paradox Forum to find where the Quickstart Guide is located. At the end of this Strategy Guide you will also find a sequence of case studies, charts and player aids that should help you to understand things better.



*** GEOPOLITICS: EVALUATING YOUR COUNTRY IN A WORLD CONTEXT

“My good friends this is the second time in our history that there has come back from Germany to Downing Street peace with honor. I believe it is peace in our time.”

– Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, September 30, 1938

KNOW YOUR COUNTRY

First, it's important to know some things about how to run your country that are relevant both, during wartime, and at times of peace. Take a few moments to look at your country, both on the map and through several Mapmodes and Interfaces which are important to understanding your own land.

Take a look at your economy. The next chapter will explain a lot of things about the economy, and some of it may not make sense until you get to that chapter. But at least once you get there you'll have an idea of what it's talking about.

Check out your provinces. Notice what type of terrain each province has, and where the rivers run. See where your airbases and naval bases are. Do you have any other installations, like anti-aircraft or radar? Turn on the Victory Point mapmode and see where your country's victory points are located. Then turn on the Resources mapmode. A green province indicates you have industry (IC points) there. Little icons will show what resources are produced inside your country. Hover your mouse cursor over them and examine the tooltip to see how much each province produces, then check the tooltips in your resource stockpiles and see how much your country produces, total, and how much you're using.

All that gives you an idea of which provinces are most important to your country. Now, think back to your country's terrain and consider where the mountains, forests, marsh/swamps, jungles and rivers are – those terrain types are most helpful in forming defensive lines if you need them. How would you defend your most important provinces (especially those where your victory points or IC are located) if you were invaded?

Now, add to that an overview of your military forces. Make sure of what all your air, land and naval units are, where they are, and you must reorganise them the way you want them. Do you need to reposition them to be able to defend your country better, if you're at risk of invasion? The answer to that, largely, depends on what kinds of external threats you face, so...

EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS

Now, take a look around the world and see what's around you. This is a basic “risk assessment.” Where are the major military powers, in relation

to you? Determine who is at war, where, and what they're doing about it. What countries may pose a threat to you, and who might be your best friends as allies?

In your survey of the world, take note of what countries typically supply certain resources. What's the distribution?

You would be wise to check over the region's terrain, infrastructure map, and see what the weather is doing. Continue to pay attention to the weather occasionally, so you don't get surprised. There will be “seasonal weather patterns” you should take into account – start learning what they are.

Start building a strategic planning “map” in your mind, or even draw one out on paper or digitally. Operations deserve detailed planning, and the more such long-term planning you can perform, the better able you will be to implement those plans, or to react when other countries challenge you.

Straits can be of massive strategic importance. For instance, if you want to prevent the Royal Navy from attacking your Baltic supply lines, as Germany, capturing Denmark is a valuable goal, because possessing it cuts off enemy access to the Baltic Sea. All straits have certain advantages. Can you imagine how much more difficult it would be to manage a two-ocean navy, as the United States, if you did not have access through the Panama Canal? Or as the British if you did not have access through Gibraltar or Suez? British control of both Gibraltar and Suez causes the Italian Navy to be bottled up in the Mediterranean so she can't support Germany, and Germany cannot support her.

How is your international trade going to be impacted if you go to war? Think... What trade routes might get cut off, how you could defend them, how you could do without them if you couldn't defend them?

Will you have lost trading partners because you're at war with them? Will you have to send extra escort ships with your convoys to protect them? How risky is that trade route, and is it possible to set up an alternative? What resources might you have to stockpile in order to make it through “a cold winter?”

If you expect your trade routes (or colonies!) may be cut off during wartime, you should consider investing in a stronger navy, as well as in a large number of escorts. You won't be able to assign escorts until war is declared, but as soon as that happens, pause the game and assign them

to all your important convoy routes. If some are more important than others, consider a higher percentage of escorts on that route, even if it leaves others unescorted.

If you're playing a colonial power, or if you're fighting one, keep in mind not just how many resources or IC exist, but **where** they exist. Take the Netherlands, for instance. During peacetime, the Dutch have plenty of crude oil and rare materials to make use of. However, if war comes, will they be able to use convoys to transport those resources home so they can make use of them? Will the British have access to India? These powers will also have to send supplies via convoy in order to maintain any military units they have stationed overseas. Colonial powers should always take these things into consideration, and do their best to plan for the day when they might need to protect their shipping lanes, or else make do without. Their enemies will need to be ready to prey upon the convoy routes.

Now start planning your geopolitical struggle. Don't assume you'll have to go to war... but also don't assume you won't be forced into war!

Which countries will you cultivate as allies? Which faction will you try to join, if any? If your intent is conquest, what are your first targets? Who will become angry with you if you invade? Wars cause threat, and many countries may wonder if they're next. Who will go to war with you? If no one, who's your next target? Will you dare to risk global war, or try to get what you can before that happens?

If you're a western power, or a communist country, what can you do to control enemy aggression so that it doesn't build into global war? Can you build a coalition of major powers to put the world's aggressive powers in their place?

These are things you must consider at the start of any game, and which you should continue to watch as the game progresses. If you start in some of the later scenarios, after World War II has already begun in earnest, many of these questions will already be answered for you, and so what remains to plan is what major offensives or invasions you can mount against the enemy.

Note to HOI 2 veterans: It's important to remember this game is not HOI 2. In the old game, you could always count on various things happening on a particular date. If you were Germany, you didn't need to worry about another AI-controlled power declaring war on you until you provoked them. In HOI 3 you have no such assurance! World War II could spark at any time circumstances warrant, and it's possible that Italy or the Soviet Union might start trouble which messes up your own best-laid plans. Other ahistorical things may create opportunities or problems. You need to be on guard, and not assume things will always remain as they were in previous games.

USING DIPLOMACY FOR VICTORY OR SURVIVAL

Who needs diplomats when there's war to be had, right? But for most countries, there is advantage to be gained during peace and war through diplomacy.

Even if you're anxious to go to war, do not forget the importance of your Diplomatic tools. First off, most countries are not going to last long in war without a balanced economy fully supplied with Resources. Also, you will want to find allies and maneuver yourself into an advantageous position before the war starts; both of these important pre-war functions require the use of Diplomatic Points. Diplomacy continues even after war starts, because those same needs persist as you try to bring neutral powers onto your side, or at least to get them to supply your war machine with resources.

You have a certain rating of diplomatic relations with every country in the game. This will change as you "relate" to that country in positive and negative ways. One way to improve your relations is to set up trade agreements with that country.

Eventually, these relations may enable you to join in alliances with these countries, or perhaps to join their factions.

ALLIANCES

In a volatile world, a good alliance may be the only protection small countries get.

Alliances will help protect you, but only **if** your allies are able to support you on a practical level. This is where Czechoslovakia and Poland learned their lesson. The promises of Britain and France were of little use except as a back-door threat – the British and French lacked both, the will to protect them and the proximity to have allowed it. Provided your allies are in a position to support you, their planes and armies become useful to you.

The other difficulty with alliances is that they each carry the possibility of dragging you into a war you did not want, or were not prepared for.

Requests to join an Alliance have a chance of success which is determined by the country's relative relations with you, by its National Unity, its general economic situation (all these being taken together as a "war readiness" value), and its Neutrality value. They can be revoked at any time.

FACTIONS

A faction is like a big alliance – it's an alliance with at least one major power, which will hopefully have the staying power to survive in war against their enemy.

But you must be careful who your friends are. Once you join a faction, you're stuck, and will have to participate in whatever wars they drag you into, so you should be careful to know who their likely enemies are. Faction warfare in HOI 3 is to the death – to the final victory. Make sure the side you join is likely to have a chance at winning. Be prepared to help ensure that result, or die trying.

Faction members are the only countries which may influence a country's "drift" on the ideological spectrum, which ranges between western democracy (the Allies), communism (the Comintern), and fascism (the Axis).

INFLUENCE & DRIFT

The inability of non-faction members to influence major powers means any adventuresome minor risks the wrath of a major power anytime he runs afoul of their national interests. Reality is that major powers run the world, and they often will step in to stop a minor country from doing what they themselves feel perfectly free to do. The advantage of this, for players who have the stomach for it, is that minors are an even greater challenge to play.

Be careful when influencing other countries. You're actually committing to an ongoing investment of Diplomatic Points. Each such investment will cost approximately 2 diplomatic points per day until you tell it to stop or you run out of points. You need to have a diplomatic points stored up, or else you may run out entirely. This may be a problem if you have other urgent needs, such as for trade deals.

However, through careful use of a faction's influence, it's possible to "tip the balance" in the battle for ideological drift. If you hover your mouse

cursor over a country's roundel in the diplomatic alignment display, a tooltip will show all the different influences on that country's alignment. You may notice a positive value for each faction, based on "relationships with faction members." If you can set up trade deals, and begin influencing that country, eventually you may no longer have to influence them in order for them to continue becoming closer to your faction because they will have "fallen into your orbit" – they will have close enough relations with you that those combined influences send them in your direction slowly. You may still want to "hurry them along" to get them to join your faction sooner, or to head off other factions who may want to turn them back in their direction.

NEUTRALITY & THREAT

If you're itching to get into a war, or if you're really concerned about your neighbor's aggressive tendencies and you want to begin gearing up for a war you're convinced is coming, you need to understand how neutrality and threat interact, and what you can do to manipulate them each.

Certain actions, such as changes to mobilization laws, going to war, and even alliances, are blocked unless you have a neutrality rating below a certain level.

You cannot go to war unless your neutrality rating is less than or equal to the highest threat your country faces. There is a large offset to this rule allowed for Axis countries, because they are assumed to be more aggressive, and more willing to risk conflict. If you intend to go to war, you must take action to reduce your neutrality. Lowering your Neutrality also lowers demand for Consumer Goods.

Certain game events may cause the neutrality of your country to lessen, and the same may happen to other countries. There may be some decisions you could make that can also reduce your neutrality. Otherwise, you could assign internal spies, and set them to the mission of reducing your country's neutrality.

Because reduced neutrality allows certain actions you may want to take, make sure to keep an eye on the level and respond when you're able. If you've just passed 70 percent neutrality, is there a diplomatic action or a law you'd like to change, which wasn't possible before?

"Lowering your neutrality is handy for declaring wars and joining alliances, but it can also help you economically by reducing the CG requirement for troops."

– David Ballantyne (Darkrenown), Paisley, Scotland

ECONOMIC MOBILIZATION

Economic mobilization is the process of preparing your reserve military units and your civilian economy for the possibility of war. If you are politically able to do so, it almost always makes sense for a country to move away from a Full Civilian Economy toward a higher economic output. It just opens up so many options for countries that can afford it. How high to turn up the economy depends on political realities, on how much you need money and on whether your resource stockpiles can sustain the increased IC.

However, consider – **If increasing your IC by 25 percent will run your resources dry, and you have no way of managing your resources through trade to prevent that, then increasing your economic output is the last thing you want to do!**

Peacetime mobilization will also increase your overall supply

consumption, partly because whatever reserve units you have will begin consuming more supplies. Basically, your military units begin using less consumer goods and more military supplies.

Increasing your Industrial Mobilization will reduce the amount of money you produce as you begin converting IC toward military purposes, because there is a reduced demand for consumer goods during times of war. Your country's conscription laws may also reduce your ability to make money by taking men out of their productive jobs.

MILITARY MOBILIZATION

Military mobilization is the final step in the process, occurring when you push the large mobilize button at the lower right of your political interface. You can do this even before going through any of the steps of economic mobilization, but there's not really any reason to do so unless you suddenly become concerned war is going to happen before you can economically mobilize. Some western democracies may face this difficulty, because their neutrality may not allow them to undertake some of the steps of economic mobilization before war arrives.

The act of mobilizing early may have a serious impact on relations with a neighboring country because of its perception of threat, but it may have a much lower impact on relations with a country across the ocean. Because it is isolated by distance, the United States will not be very strongly influenced by any of these events. If you're an aggressive country, and you're presumably trying to "sneak up" on your potential enemies without allowing them warning before war, you may want to delay this step, which is often recognized as the final step before war.

THE LONG AND SHORT OF RESERVES

Part of the process of preparing for war is to build up your military. Some countries may have an easy time of this, others may not. One option for countries which don't have a lot of spare IC – especially countries whose consumer goods demands are so heavy there's not much left for the military – may be to build reserve units which will begin at much reduced strength, but which will reinforce and grow in strength as the country mobilizes by steps. They can help build your military potential without quickly increasing the expenses needed to maintain them.

Of course, once War seems near, you will have to find Money and Supplies to Mobilize these Divisions. It is also accepting a calculated risk, because it takes time for these units to develop up to their full useful Strength.

Be careful when building a large reserve army to save on costs. Your country may be small enough that, though you can build lots of reserves at minimum mobilization, you will have trouble managing them once they begin to mobilize. Partially mobilized reserves could quickly bankrupt you if you don't have the supplies or peacetime supply of consumer goods they require. Going to war quickly, or rushing the mobilization at the last minute before war, may be an economic necessity, and can be a dangerous, expensive, risky game.

On the other hand, if you can fake out your neighbor, it's at least possible that he may go through this same process – fearing your attack, and instead bankrupting himself while you sit by and watch! But that is, at best, a risky game of its own.

There will also be a sudden intense draw on your manpower if you have a lot of reserve divisions mobilizing, because during peacetime you'll have to provide both, consumer goods and funds for reinforcement.



During wartime, you'll only have to worry about reinforcing these units, but if you're only mobilizing your reserve divisions after war has been declared, that's a problem in itself.

GOING TO WAR

Once you find yourself at war – whether it's from your own doing, or someone else's – how do you deal with it?

Develop a grand strategy for your war. In 1942, the Allies decided that it was most important to finish the war in Europe first, as it was felt it would be too difficult to fight both wars effectively at once, and Germany was ultimately the greater threat. You may find an entirely different dynamic in your own games. Even small considerations may entirely change the analysis.

What are your goals? What is the best way to achieve them? There



Italian bombers and fighters helping the Nationalists in Spain.

THE FIRST MEETING OF ARMS

When the Spanish Civil War sparked off, in 1936, the world already felt like a larger war was coming. There was much disagreement over what to do about it. The British and French enacted an "embargo," hoping to prevent the sale of weapons to either side. But the Soviet Union saw an opportunity to gain an ally in its worldwide communist revolution – they recognized that if they could control or lead the anti-fascist forces of Republican Spain, they might acquire a potential new member of the "Communist International" (referred to as the Comintern). The USSR shipped Polikarpov I-15 biplanes and the advanced I-16 to fight for the Republicans. Recognizing a similar opportunity to gain a fascist ally, Germany and Italy provided soldiers and aircraft to serve with the Nationalists, such as the Heinkel 51 biplane, early models of the Messerschmitt Bf-109, the Junkers Ju-52 transport, and the Italian Fiat CR.32. Volunteers from many countries fought on both sides of the conflict, along with some professional soldiers. The most famous expeditionary force in Spain was Germany's Condor Legion, which numbered nearly 20,000 soldiers and pilots at one time, and which clearly had a hand in making the Nationalist victory possible. The Condor Legion fielded many different types of aircraft, which the Germans consciously sent there for "field testing," meaning to train soldiers and pilots for the coming war, and to find the capabilities of their weapons.

Application: Training and experience are an important part of combat, and can build up as a determining force over time. If the United States Army had been landed in France in 1943, as some suggested, they might have fared very poorly. The Operation Torch invasion of North Africa in November, 1942, prepared the Americans for the kind of combat they would face, and that experience proved very valuable. Before jumping into a major operation, see if there's a place where you can test your divisions against the enemy without so much at risk. If you're still at peace, do you have an ally who could use an expeditionary force, which would gain experience in that conflict which might benefit you later? Even if you've played a few rounds of HOI 3, your countries' armies may face entirely different challenges, depending on who they're fighting. Nations have different advantages, disadvantages, and strategies, and "getting to know your enemy" may come in handy before you get onto the main battlefield.

will be a variety of country sketches at the end of this Strategy Guide which should provide helpful tips about what each country needs to pay attention to, but you also need to learn to make your own evaluations.

When you start your scenario, there will be an immediate economic strategy which you should adopt. It's always going to depend on context – what's most necessary for your country at that point in history, considering what's likely to happen? As a small country just as war arrives at their doorstep, you may not have the luxury of developing your economy before military action decides your fate. So you might concentrate your IC into upgrades or reinforcements. Larger countries, even during war, may have the opportunity to build their economy, but might instead choose to build large numbers of divisions and airwings. Major countries will often choose a combination of these options. The way you set your Laws, and the way you allocate your production and leadership sliders will be driven by your priorities.

Production and research must always be driven by your long-term goals. If you're Germany, and you desperately need to invade the UK, you're going to be really sorry if you don't have some paratroops or marines trained, or transport ships or planes lined up.

DON'T PANIC!

When you start a scenario as a major country at war, with a lot of divisions either in combat, or along a frontier beside the enemy, **don't panic!** It may seem overwhelming at first, but there is a system to ease your mind.

Scout your frontier before you start the game. Check out the surrounding terrain, infrastructure levels, etc. The more spread out your empire is – colonies or conquests – the more difficult it will be to maintain security of your lands.

Start at one end of your front or the other. If the one you first look at seems overwhelming, check the other end. If that also looks like too much to handle, then pick a spot in the middle of the front where it looks a little less complicated. Start there and return to the other half of the front later.

Somewhere, there is likely to be a place where your action is clear. Once you've resolved that, everything else should fall into place, because you'll know what units are and are not able to attack. If you have no units who are practically able to attack, then don't bother. Dig in and remain in a defensive position – let your enemy make the first move, and then you can respond to the choice he's committed to. Most choices, in combat, have good points and drawbacks. Figure out what the drawback of his choice is, and exploit it.

Do this analysis in reverse, too. Look for spots along your line which are vulnerable to enemy attack. Do you have a province where only one division faces several enemy armoured divisions? It might be time to find other divisions to move in there, so the enemy isn't encouraged to attack.

Never assume your flanks are secure, just because you have neutrals around you. France learned this lesson (twice!) when Germany invaded through neutral Belgium in two world wars. Frontiers such as this could either be guarded with fortresses, or with military units who can double as reserves.

This lesson should not be lost on aggressor powers, either. If Germany doesn't conquer Denmark, for instance, the British might violate their neutrality (like they tried to with Norway) in order to secure their free passage into the Baltic Sea. Often, neutrality restrictions will make this a difficult strategy for the Allies, but don't dismiss it as impossible.

BEING A GOOD PARTNER IN WAR

Even if you have only a small part in the war, keep an eye on everyone and everything, and keep up on it. You may see areas where you can contribute, or where you must be wary.

Pay attention to what your allies need, too. Even if you're okay, your allies may need resources or money to properly support you.

EXPEDITIONARY FORCES

If you're both at war, you have the option of handing your units over as expeditionary forces long enough for your ally to transport the troops to where you need them (presuming you don't have this ability yourself), and then ask for them back. The AI may still misuse your units briefly, but then you take back control and can employ your divisions under your own control in the place where your ally left them.

You should be very careful with the use of expeditionary forces. Remember, first, you're handing your precious, lovingly crafted divisions, ships or airwings over to a computer for the AI to handle. Computers are not known for their compassion or for handling someone else's property gently. Besides, you probably have a better idea of how to use your divisions to help your enemy anyway.

PUPPETING, ANNEXING & LIBERATING

War often involves conquest, which may involve occupation. The handling of occupation policies is handled later, but while we're discussing diplomacy let's also talk about how to use diplomatic tools to decide the fate of the countries you take over.

Conquering all of a country's territory may allow the possibility of annexation. This may be the choice if you just want to take over the land, along with all of its resources, factories, manpower, etc. It will be part of your country, and you'll be responsible for its military security. Sadly, you'll also be responsible for a lot of anger from patriots inside that country who want to be free, and who are willing to cause trouble and kill your soldiers as a form of protest. This is the most effective way to utilize that country's resources for your own purposes, but only if you're willing to put up with a higher level of revolts.

There are times, however, when you may want to have that country act with relative independence, but still be under your control. In those cases, you can puppet them (place a government in power which listens to your wise counsel). They will raise their own armies, and have their own economy, but their populations will be more likely to support you than oppose you because they have their own people telling them what to do and how to fight. The fact that you're there, telling their leaders what to do, is less important than the nationality of the guy in charge.

As you re-take territory that your enemies had previously conquered, you may have the opportunity to liberate a former ally of yours. This allows them to re-join your war, and to begin helping you again with their own resources and soldiers. But before you push that button to liberate a country and invite their government in exile back, you should wait until you're sure you can hold the territory in question. Otherwise, you may enter a cycle of back-and-forth liberating, and find you have a Government in Exile on your hands again.





MARSHALING YOUR ECONOMY FOR WAR

“I am confident that if and when production of consumer or luxury goods in certain industries requires the use of machines and raw materials that are essential for defense purposes, then such production must yield, and will gladly yield, to our primary and compelling purpose. ... So I appeal to the owners of plants, to the managers, to the workers, to our own government employees to put every ounce of effort into producing these munitions swiftly and without stint. With this appeal I give you the pledge that all of us who are officers of your government will devote ourselves to the same whole-hearted extent to the great task that lies ahead.”

– President Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 29, 1940

Don't get too far ahead of yourself on “day one” of your new administration. Before you decide all your production plans, and before you decide which economic laws to use, start setting up trade deals and get a feel for how your economy is running. You may find a limitation in one or two areas which you didn't expect.

MINISTERS

You can actually make a substantial impact upon your economy, research or combat abilities by choosing the right ministers in the politics screen. Each minister has different qualities they can contribute. Some ministers have “qualities” you want to keep far, far away from your government. But others can be very helpful.

The army, air and naval ministers are easy – choose one which matches whatever type of unit you want to build the most of – artillery, cruisers, tactical air, etc. Head of Intelligence is also easy – choose what type of intelligence is important to you.

Your foreign minister is most useful if you want to align your country in a certain direction. Certain ministers are more receptive to one faction or another. Other foreign minister candidates may be able to increase your ruling party's support so that you don't have to worry so much about losing the next election, or having some disruption break out.

It is possible, over time, to change your country's ideological alignment through the use of the Align to Faction diplomatic action, as well as the appointment of certain foreign ministers.

The two most powerful minister positions are your Chief of Staff and your Armaments Minister. Your chief of staff helps your military, and may assist with organisation regain, with speed of movement, with supply

throughput, or with reinforcement chance. Decide what you need most at a particular time, and make sure that guy's in the slot.

Other than your Head of Government or Head of State – neither of which you can change without losing an election or having some other badness occur – the only minister which can improve your available IC is the Armaments Minister. The Administrative Genius can even improve your IC by 10%, which is pretty useful. Other armaments minister candidates, if IC isn't your main concern, can help with supply production, reduce consumer goods needs (maybe best during peacetime), or can help with certain technologies. Remember, if you're short on resources, you might prefer someone who improves supply production over someone who increases IC, because that also increases your resource consumption.

Your Minister of Security can also help you maintain support for your ruling party, or maintaining national unity, but otherwise can mostly help with killing spies. If you are really having difficulties on the war front, and you're concerned your country may surrender because national unity is getting low, that's one time to make sure you have a good minister of security who can hopefully help you.

Keep in mind that new ministers appear over time, who may have better qualities than the ones you currently have in office.

Also, your ministers should be “context sensitive” – some ministers have traits which are useless during peacetime, or useless during war. You may want IC bonuses early in the game, because you're preparing for war. But later, you may want to switch him out in favor of someone who benefits your immediate war effort more than the IC would. Keeping Ministers in, and swapping them out, is always a matter of value judgments

– who creates the most value for you right now, and does the value of one guy outweigh the value of the other guy, all things considered?

LAWS

There will be requirements to be met before you can implement certain laws. Most of these have to do with neutrality levels, national unity, whether a country is at war, or even whether the ruling party is a democratic or authoritarian party. Because of these requirements, there are some democracies that will never be able to enact some of these laws (repression, for instance) because unless they become totalitarian, they probably cannot meet the prerequisites.

But generally even the western democracies will be able to enact the higher mobilization laws by the time war arrives, if not before. Being at war opens options for almost all of these laws.

Some law categories are incidental. More advanced education laws, for instance, is always what you would prefer, but only **if** you can afford it. That's a tradeoff – money for leadership. The same could be said for training laws – if you can afford to wait to get your troops and units, you'll benefit from the extra training. However, if you're in a desperate situation, minimal training may have to do. **Editor's Note:** Experience gain is one of those things that may get tweaked from time to time, so the usefulness of training versus combat experience may vary from patch to patch.

The press laws are generally not very important, and unless you're worried about what enemy spies are doing, or your government has become very unstable (perhaps because of spies), it won't give you much advantage to go for more oppressive laws. The civil laws are repressive in nature too, yet they do provide some advantages against spies, aid the ruling party in maintaining power, and reduce consumer goods need, all while they increase the likelihood of serious revolts.

Your industrial policy impacts things a lot, but the realistic choices for each country will be pretty well scripted. Unless you have high dissent, and not enough IC to overspend on consumer goods, there's not much point to anyone having the Consumer Product Orientation, which is only available if you're at peace anyway.

Generally, the choice between Mixed Industry and Heavy Industry focus is whether you are at war or not, though many players may be fine operating with a mixed economy even during war. Basically, the tradeoff for heavy industry requires more consumer goods during wartime in favor of better supply throughput, but CG needs during wartime aren't very high anyway, so for the most part it will benefit anyone who's at war.

You will always want to increase conscription laws as quickly as you're allowed, because in this version of the game there is no negative to any of the levels.

Obviously, the most important and far reaching of the laws you can enact are the economic category, which mobilize your economy for war. There are plenty of limits on these, and so you'll generally be nearer to war before you can enact them. Plus, once you get there, you'll need the resources stockpiles to support the increased IC. Provided you have that, though, you will always want to increase your economic mobilization as quickly as possible because it opens up so many opportunities to make your military better than the other guy's. The other tradeoff is money – if you're short on it, you may not be wise to increase your economy unless you want to counteract the reduction in money with CG or supply spending – a realistic alternative for most countries. More on economic mobilization and management in the next chapter...

When you enact a new law, make sure to look for other things which are affected. Higher IC output, for instance, will need to be allocated, and you may have changed consumer goods need, etc.

PRODUCTION SLIDERS

The production sliders are very important, because they're what keeps your whole economy and military machine functioning. There's a "need" listed by each category, and if you're not meeting the need, the value of your funding (displayed on the right) will be shown in red (and there will probably be an alert in the upper left corner of your screen). Otherwise, it will be white.

While the most critical slider is production, because that's what builds anything you want to construct, it's easiest to determine the slider locations for the others first – determine how much you have to use on production by process of elimination. Consumer goods is a fixed amount, and unless you want to raise some extra cash, you'll always keep this at the level of need – not more than, and **most certainly** not less than. Anytime consumer goods are underfunded, you'll be gaining dissent, which no one wants.

The next categories to select are upgrades and reinforcements. As noted below, it's not a huge problem if you cannot completely fund reinforcements or upgrades. Either you can come back to these funding categories when your economic situation improves, or you can partially fund them, which will gradually implement the reinforcement or upgrades unless you are either researching very quickly (i.e. developing new upgrades) or in heavy combat, requiring continual reinforcement. But usually, you will find partial funding just spreads out the cost over a longer period, but accomplishes the same result.

Both of these can be checked by periodic inspections of the numbers to make sure the demand for funding is dropping. This can keep you from overfunding too – alerts will tell you when you're funding above the need, but a careful watch can allow you to shift funding to more important sliders by reducing the rate at which you're partially funding upgrades and reinforcement.

Don't be surprised if you have a slight reinforcement need during peacetime. Any land province has some attrition, and so your units will slowly "leak" manpower which must be replaced (due to illness, retirements, etc.). Any province where the temperature is above 30 degrees Celsius, or below -10, your troops will experience additional attrition.

Your supplies are an interesting tradeoff – this value will probably jockey with your production value as your needs change. Despite what the alerts may tell you, there's never a time when IC spent on supplies is wasted, unless you have an enormous stockpile and no one to buy them. A good stock of supplies is always good to have for wartime, because it offers you flexibility, and the comfort of knowing you won't face a shortage that could bring your military operations to a halt. You can also sell supplies during peacetime or wartime, and these sales may be your most viable means of getting the money you need to buy other resources. See the economy chapter for more on trading supplies to get money for other things. In any case, a positive rate of supply production is always a good thing. If this value goes "red" from time to time (i.e. your army is drawing from your stockpile), that's not necessarily a bad thing so long as you have a sufficient stockpile.

If you do have a serious need for production IC, it's okay to reduce

your supply production into the red sometimes, so long as you have a plan for how to ensure it won't eliminate your stockpile in the long run. Production is always needed by countries as they prepare for or conduct war. Recommendations on how to spend this production IC can be found in the Production chapter.

Any of these sliders can be changed by clicking and dragging, or by using the "+" or "-" buttons. A newly added feature "increments" these buttons by a percentage (i.e. they'll move faster) if you press the "shift" key while clicking.

One last caution... Changing economic laws will immediately impact your Consumer Goods need, even if you don't see the increased IC right away, so **make sure** you go to your production interface and adjust figures on day one, then again on day two once your IC has updated. Otherwise, people may become dissatisfied with your government and dissent will rise.

UPGRADES

It's always a better bet to upgrade your existing units than to build new ones. These will apply all those techs you've researched, and give your units better performance in combat (and sometimes even in peacetime). Many scenarios start with some upgrades pending, so quickly decide how aggressive you want to be in pursuing them.

As mentioned before, you can underfund upgrades. During peacetime, you'll still want to upgrade to prepare for war. During wartime, you should take upgrading more seriously. Either slightly underfund it, or watch carefully for the alert telling you your upgrades are complete. Otherwise you might waste some of your valuable IC on upgrades that don't exist.

To fully upgrade a unit, through one cycle of upgrades, will take two months. It may take another two months to upgrade through a second level of techs, if you're that far behind. You may see some increase, though, in the speed of upgrades, if you have more than one level to finish.

REINFORCEMENTS

I'm not aware of any scenarios that start with reinforcement needs, but if you're at war you're likely to need reinforcements in large numbers soon. Even if you're at peace you'll need to replace "turnover" in your units. Don't allocate anything for this in your first budget, because it would be wasted, but take note of how much your need is within the first week or so, and allocate at least a portion of it.

Underfunding reinforcements is wise, because otherwise you'll always be changing the slider. If you experiment, you may be able to find an "equilibrium" point, unless you're at war, when you'll always have fluctuations due to casualties. Don't get too far behind, or you'll have to change things more substantially to catch up.

CONSUMER GOODS

Consumer good management is critically important because of the economic and combat effects of dissent. If your country is experiencing Dissent, whether from events or from an accidental lapse in consumer goods supply, it's important to get it down as quickly as possible. Dissent is an economy killer. It boosts the need for consumer goods, while at the same time removing your access to a portion of your potential (base) IC. It's a huge strain.

Consumer goods are your bread & circuses, which you can use to keep the people happy. Don't just provide a slight boost to IC to draw the dissent down gradually. It's a cancer, eating away at your combat capability and your economic strength every single day! Put as much

effort as you can toward eliminating the dissent, and then you can reallocate once the dissent is gone.

Events which cause dissent can be very impactful, and so responding to them is ever more important.

Be warned – you can actually reach a point-of-no-return, where the dissent you've caused by underproducing consumer goods reduces the economy to the point where you don't have enough available IC to meet the consumer goods demand (even if you stop spending on everything else) and it will be impossible to turn your dissent level in a positive direction. If you're locked into a Full Civilian Economy (because you're not at war, or whatever), and you reach 50 percent Dissent, you will have basically zero IC left. In fact, you'll reach a point of no return long before that, because you'll lack enough IC to fund a positive Consumer Goods flow.

Both, supplies and consumer goods production can be used to raise more money, which means you have more ability to acquire resources. Surplus consumer goods are converted to cash directly, whereas many countries around the world might be willing to give you money in return for supply shipments through trade.

Anytime your economy changes, such as going to war or changing laws, you should take a moment to check your CG spending.

REFINING OIL TO FUEL

Because any major country will need fuel to keep its tanks, planes and motorised or mechanised units running, how you acquire fuel is very important. You can trade for it, of course, but it costs about twice as much to purchase fuel on the world market as it does to purchase oil. Unless you have some tremendous fuel consumption, which outstrips your ability to refine your own oil, it's always going to be preferable to acquire the oil first and refine it at home.

Since crude oil is not a useable resource, but fuel is, there's no reason why you would want to prevent your economy from automatically converting your crude oil to fuel, which it does at a rate of 10 percent of your available IC.

ENERGY TO OIL CONVERSION

It is not wise to let your crude oil stockpiles completely disappear, because then you have to rely upon energy conversion to produce any oil, and ultimately any fuel, you need. This is an expensive process in the early game, and it's still not cheap even once you've researched the right techs to improve the conversion ratios.

"Better coal to oil tech reduces the amount of coal you need to get the 10 percent, but you never get more oil from conversion unless you get more IC. If you have 50 available IC you can convert enough energy to get 5 oil per day. At 0 coal to oil tech that'd consume 50 energy per day. At level 5 coal to oil you'd still get 5 oil per day, but it'd only cost you 10 energy per day. That's quite different from how oil to fuel is converted. Oil to fuel is 50 percent of your base IC (not available IC), and better oil refining tech increases the amount of fuel your get per oil instead of reducing the amount of oil you use."

– David Ballantyne (Darkrenown), Paisley, Scotland

MILITARY PRODUCTION & MANPOWER

As with many things in HOI3, managing your available manpower is always a balancing act for some countries. Infantry is an economizing choice

which saves IC, but is very intensive in its use of manpower. Things like air units and armoured brigades reduce your need for manpower, while still having a powerful combat effect. Choose one or the other, depending on whether your shortage is in IC or manpower.

If you've come to a point where your manpower can't support any new construction, and is having trouble keeping up with reinforcement needs in the field, you've come to a point where you need to make some serious choices. If you're a minor partner in the war, withdraw from combat and set up defensive lines where hopefully the enemy won't notice you. Hopefully your manpower situation will turn around once your units are fully reinforced, and you can start probing forward again. If you're a major power, you probably won't have this option and you'll have to take more drastic measures.

If you start to hit a major manpower crunch, there are some steps you can take. Obviously, you can change your conscription laws to provide more manpower, if you haven't already. If you have units which are "out of theatre" (i.e. they're not serving any particular purpose) you can disband them and return their manpower to the pool. If your outlying units are needed, but aren't in combat right now, you could set them to not receive reinforcements, which will cause them gradually to lose strength, but if you can correct the situation within about a years' time you'll be fine. You could always turn off reinforcements in the production sliders, and even gain back the IC you'd spend, but this is a "poor economy" – eventually your units in the field will wither and die.

An interesting method of increasing manpower most people might not think of is to change the occupation policies in countries you've taken over. This will admit certain sympathetic members of their population into your army. Keep in mind that it may also reduce any IC or resources you were getting from there, and the increase in manpower won't happen right away – it takes some time for the people to adjust to your new policy.

OFFICER SUPPLY

You control your supply of officers through the leadership sliders, but otherwise the situation is the same as with manpower. If you face a critical shortage of officers, many of the solutions are the same – laws, or the reduction of the numbers of units. The quickest way of getting more officers is to disband HQ units, hopefully by re-shuffling units to other HQs. If you get to the point where you need to eliminate one stage of HQ for a unit entirely (i.e. so that it does not have a corps HQ, for instance), that will begin to harm your combat effectiveness. On the other hand, not having enough officers does that also.

IMPROVING ECONOMY THROUGH CONSTRUCTION

Improving your economy through construction of new factories and/or research of industrial technologies will benefit you on the long term. You're literally investing your short-term economy to ensure its long-term growth. Because of immediate wartime needs, it's always better to do this before the war, not during, but many countries will benefit from a limited production commitment even during the war. Some countries may find this is the only way they can survive a long war against the stronger economies of their opponents.

However, there is what's called an "opportunity cost" to doing so – by spending 5 IC building a factory, for instance, that's 5 IC daily which you cannot use on something else for a full year. What else could you have built

using that IC? Building IC in this manner is a long-term investment, which is always at the cost of less short-term investing. If you can afford to make long-term investments because you don't believe there are urgent needs on the short-term, then economic investment of this type will generally be a good choice. Otherwise, you'll probably find researching production technology and efficiency a better return on your investment.

RESOURCE PRODUCTION

You can increase your production of certain resources internally by developing the technologies that improve extraction. In HOI 3 you cannot increase production by increasing infrastructure, as in previous games. Obviously, another very efficient method of increasing your resource output is by conquering the resources of other countries, which has the added benefit of denying that source of supply to the enemy.

ECONOMIC IMPROVEMENT THROUGH CONQUEST

Especially in a game built around a world war, one of the most obvious ways to improve an economy and build your industrial power is to invade and conquer other countries, taking over their Resources and IC, or a portion thereof. You can significantly change your available IC, resources, even your leadership and manpower, depending on what territory you take, and what type of occupation government you impose.

Since harsh occupations reduce your ability to get some of those, but increase output of others, you must make a choice depending on what you need. Sometimes, you will prefer to have manpower and leadership contributed from these lands anyway, rather than IC and resources.

MOBILIZATION EFFECTS ON ECONOMY

The Laws you set will impact how the economy is being "geared" toward war production levels. Generally, as your policies and laws reflect a sensed threat of coming war, the economy will become more available for military use.

Building an army earlier allows it to eat up supplies (which is expensive). It's important that you allow your mobilization to peak on time, and not too early, which would invite economic disaster, or too late, which would invite military disaster.

RESOURCE STOCKPILES

Countries are always performing a balancing act, trying to maintain enough of one stockpile to ensure their security while at the same time trying not to sacrifice another too badly by trading it away. Because of this, trade agreements are in constant flux: they may be canceled, or you may find that a country which refused to trade with you a month ago is now willing to make the same trade they previously turned down. Fortunately, you do not lose diplomatic points on trade offers which are not accepted, so there's no reason not to try to conclude a favorable trade with someone.

Resource stockpiles are your main concern. Lack of money you can deal with. By re-prioritizing your IC, you can devote a percentage of it toward consumer goods, which should overcome any cash crunch you have unless you really cannot afford to stop building things. If you're at that point, resources are not your most immediate concern. You can also produce supplies to sell, if you can find buyers, or try to find buyers for another resource you have a surplus of.

At the very beginning of your game, you need to examine each of

your resource stockpiles to see how long they will last, which ones you can use for trading, and which ones you need to supplement through trading. Remember, also, if you get into a war, you will need to have higher stockpiles than during wartime, especially if you expect you will be unable to get convoys to your main trading partners. During the deep of wartime, with your maxed-out IC drawing heavily upon your stockpiles, they can dwindle very quickly.

If you have a deficit in a resource, use a “stockpile calculator” to evaluate each stockpile: $(\text{stockpile size} / \text{daily usage} = \# \text{ of days stockpile}) / 365 = \text{years of stockpile}$. This can easily be automated with a spreadsheet, and surely some kind forum user will make a handy computer program to do it within a week of release. If you want to see how trading away a certain quantity will affect things, add the amount you want to trade to the daily usage and recalculate. If you’re producing a surplus in a resource, you will want to trade away what you don’t expect you will need during your years of war.



Signs of a dying economy: Italy has about 120 days’ worth of energy reserves. The coal to oil tech would help, because much of the drain is from conversion. Italy will be out of crude oil about 300 days after she runs out of energy, and out of fuel another hundred days after that.

Your wartime usage may be quite a bit more than during peacetime – if your peacetime economy only gives you 50 percent of your IC available, then going to full mobilization may as much as double your daily usage, and moving to a total war economy plus IC construction over the years may double it again. If you’re expecting to play a major role in the war, you’ll want four times your yearly peacetime usage per year of war. Your economic needs may prevent you from achieving that, especially if you need to trade some away to survive, or to improve other stockpiles. Just keep in mind that even if those multi-digit numbers at the top of your screen may look impressive, there’s every potential you will use much or all of it during a long war.

It’s always a good idea to run the Stockpile Calculator on stockpiles which are gaining, too (just ignore your daily production, and calculate from daily usage) – this will give you an idea of how intensively your economy uses that resource, and compare that need to your stockpile. Even if you have a stockpile, and you’re adding to it every day, a change in your situation may prove the stockpile is less durable than you thought. This process will also give you a better idea of how much of each resource you can trade away.

Set stockpile goals for yourself, and try to meet them. You don’t have to keep all of them on target all the time, but it’s possible to let one or two drop while you’re adding to another, and just switch back and forth so that they all average around your stockpile goals.

Sometimes you have to give up, temporarily, on your long-term resource strategy in order to serve a more important short-term goal. For

instance, if it’s your intent to build up your supply reserves, but you have a more urgent need for more production money to build new units, then it’s okay to set aside your supply production in favor of unit production. Eventually, you will want to go back to supply production, if that’s a valid long-term goal.

If you find that you misjudged your need for a certain resource, you can always cancel the trade deal that is shipping it out. Remember you’ll lose whatever money you were getting on the deal, too. Fortunately, most of the economic and trade mistakes players can make can also be reversed or canceled if it turns out they were the wrong decision. Don’t let the mistake go too far, though, or you will cause permanent setbacks and you’ll be really sorry.

MAKING GOOD DEALS

You’ve heard the term “tradeoff?” Every trade you make with another country is a choice. How well your tradeoffs match what’s best for your country helps determine your long term success in HOI 3.

In fact, you can turn this into more than just a moneymaking venture. It can become your means of survival! If you do lack a resource (and very few countries at war don’t lack something) you can trade your comfortable surpluses in one or more resource for money, then turn around and use that money to trade for those resources you most desperately need. Obviously, if you’re at war and your sources for trade are overseas, you’ll have to protect your trade routes. But one way or another this is your way to success in a difficult resource situation. Short of conquering more provinces which produce the resources you need, this may be the only way you can make it through your war.

Sort the diplomatic list by the commodity you’re wanting. The list will show you who needs the most (who has the higher deficit) first, with declining need as you go down the list. Or you can reverse order it for the opposite. A resource shown in red means that country has a deficit of that resource. It’s basically a sign saying “I want...,” and you can be the one to come to their rescue (and your own, if it’s a tradeoff that benefits you).

When using the country list to determine your trade offers, it’s best to check tooltips for two figures first – their rate of surplus/deficit of the resource you want to trade away, and the resource you want back. If you’re trading away energy for money, see how much energy they need, and see how much cash surplus they have. You can do a deal to sell things to a country that doesn’t have enough cash for it, and they may even agree to it, but they may cancel that deal before long, and it becomes a wasted effort. It all depends how desperate you are for that resource, and what you’re willing to put up with to get it.

Every nation begins with a stockpile of fuel and crude oil. But if you don’t expect to have a need for these (smaller countries, reliant on infantry) you could consider trading them to acquire things you do need.

If you can get trade deals with countries you want to be friendly with, not only do you get to support your friends with your resources, not your potential enemies, but your relations will also improve. In fact, the more supplies they get from you, not from other suppliers, the more likely they will be to join your faction, become allies, etc.

Plus, the cost of resources is always lower from countries who you have good diplomatic relations with. This means trade with these countries becomes increasingly cheaper over time.

You can make a profit by stockpiling goods from cheap sources (your friends), and selling them to countries which will pay more for them.

Unfortunately, especially during times of war, you may find that you're forced to end trade agreements where you were getting resources at a good price, because your stockpiles are getting too low. This may cut off your source of profit. There's a way around this. It's costly in terms of diplomatic points, but sometimes it's best to set up smaller trade agreements, even with the same country. If you experience a shortage, you can end one of them, but keep the other, maintaining your source of cheap resources.

Depending on the market situation, you may find that you need to issue your requests for trade deals soon after beginning the game, or else many of the surpluses may be accounted for and you'll have more difficulty finding good deals later on.

DON'T PANIC!

It is possible to "game" the system in a realistic, free market way, in order to gain some leverage against even what seems an impossible situation. The increase in money from one trade may allow you to manage resources in a way that would prevent running your stockpiles dry, which is why I mentioned "managing your resources through trade to prevent that." If you can use the increased IC to increase your consumer goods or supplies enough to make money, you can use that money to trade for the resources you need, and still come out the other end ahead of where you were in the amount of IC you can devote to military purposes. You will really just have to test this, because learning how is a skill that's difficult to teach. It may work in your situation, or it may not, and you may not know until you try it because the world market situation may be completely different for one country or another, or at one time or another. If it's not looking good, go back and shut everything down – return to your earlier economic laws, cut consumer goods or supplies back, cancel those trade deals. A failed experiment in this area can permanently damage your economy! Shut it down before it does.

Keep in mind that overseas trade is not free! Building more convoy ships costs money, and at least part of a trade structure as described above will involve you buying other countries' goods. Trade deals you set up will cost Diplomatic Points, too. These are costs of doing business, and fortunately it's not a heavy burden, but you have to recognize it before you start setting up too many trade deals.

Make sure to avoid conflicting or unprofitable trade deals. You don't normally want one convoy to be shipping supplies out to raise money to buy crude oil when another of your convoys is shipping crude oil out. The only reason you would do that is if you're making money on the deal – do the math and figure out if you're gaining or losing, and don't forget to calculate your "overhead" – the cost of ships you've committed to those convoys. There are times when you can make a profit through trades like this, but if you find you're losing money on one of these complicated trades, shut it down.

FORWARD LOOKING CHOICES

Be forward looking when making trades in peacetime. Go back to your geopolitical considerations. How things might change if war came. What countries couldn't you trade with if you lacked the capability to defend those trade routes with escorts and naval vessels? Do you have the capability to build sufficient escorts and naval vessels to defend those routes? If not, you may lose access to that source of resources, which is no reason not to trade with that country – it's a reason, though, to not **rely**

upon that trade in times of war. If nothing else, make efforts to build up large stockpiles of whatever resource they supply so that you will not be so needful during war.

Your diplomatic relations should enter into your considerations on trade deals in more ways than just finding the cheapest goods. Do you really want to be trading with a country which is likely to be your enemy in a few years? Ask yourself if your benefit from the trade is important enough for you to outweigh the possibility that your resources are fueling a future enemy's production against you. How desperately do you need money? How desperately do they need your resources?

If you want to do some research, you can examine how many other countries are offering that resource in sufficient quantities to be of use to them. If there's a worldwide shortage in that resource, and your country holds the key production provinces for it, you can withhold that resource and punish your future enemy with a possible internal shortage, conceivably cutting them off from the ability to use their IC to its fullest potential. Keep in mind, of course, the resource availability varies from day to day, and what seemed like a shortage one day may turn out not to be a week later. You've got nearly a month to decide to accept the trade, so if you really want to be sure of your ground you have time to watch the market. If there is sufficient supply around the world, and your future enemy just happened to have come to you for this resource, some players might be willing to accept their money in place of some other country. The estimated number of years between the trade offer and your potential war may become part of your consideration, too.

PRODUCING & TRADING SUPPLIES


Often, it will be easier and more efficient to meet your supply production needs through trade than through producing them yourself. It all depends what you have to trade, and whether your money supply will support your purchases.

When you are at war, and you receive a trade offer from another country who is not at war, they get to carry their resources to you without being attacked. Please note, though, that this may change in future versions, as it is somewhat of an exploit. It's not much of one, as the United States is the most obvious candidate for this sort of thing, and they rarely need to purchase anything.

OCCUPATION POLICIES

Once you start to conquer enemy territory, you must set an Occupation Policy to govern the provinces you've taken. Until you personally address this issue, the AI will assume you'll impose a Collaboration Government, which is the least restrictive of all the occupation policies. You can set your own according to whether your priority is to draw IC from the territory, in which case you'd want a fairly repressive occupation, or to make use of native manpower or leadership, both of which are more available the less restrictive you are.

Until you actually capture provinces with towns large enough to supply some of these materials or resources, there really is no urgent need to change from the default type. Therefore, why assume the increased risk of revolt without a good return in IC? Once you've captured something valuable, it's important that you set the policy so you get what you want from the land.



RESEARCH - WHAT'S PRACTICAL, WHAT'S NECESSARY

"In the course of the last four months it has been made probable ... that it may become possible to set up a nuclear chain reaction in a large mass of uranium, by which vast amounts of power and large quantities of new radium-like elements would be generated. ... This new phenomenon would also lead to the construction of bombs. ... In view of this situation, you may think it desirable ... to speed up the experimental work. ... I understand that Germany has actually stopped the sale of uranium from the Czechoslovakian mines which she has taken over. ... Yours very truly, Albert Einstein"

– From a letter delivered to President Franklin Roosevelt, dated August 2, 1939

LEADERSHIP SLIDER MANAGEMENT

This is where you really get to play. Hopefully.

Most of the choices with leadership sliders will be obvious. You want to optimize as much leadership as you can for research without ignoring other important needs.

If your officer ratios are at or near 100 percent, you can afford to skip on this slider for a little while. However, if you have a massive building program planned, with lots of divisions due to roll off the lines over the next couple of years, it wouldn't hurt to stock up on officers. You'll need them eventually, and it's less painful to allocate leadership for them now rather than cut back on research later on, when you're really counting on it. You might think you'd rather get the research done early. But don't think that – you'll never want to give up that research slot later on if you don't want to give it up now!

"The recruitment laws effect how many officers you get per leadership invested. As such for allied countries it may be worth considering putting 0 investment into officers until you can improve your recruitment laws. Instead put the extra leadership into research then once you have better laws or are at war you can switch round and bulk up your officer numbers again. (Basically optimize the gain you get per leadership) However, there is a fine line as leaving it too late to recruit officers means your troops could be caught by surprise and be far more likely to shatter!"

– Alan Riddell (Peekee), Canada

Some countries can get along without anything allocated to either espionage or diplomacy. However, if you have any resource shortages,

you'll need some diplomatic points for trade. Not everyone will conveniently come to you with exactly what you want. If you have a lot of diplomatic points at game start, you could research with those points now, and just reallocate your points when you need more.

Any country which is a member of a faction should keep some flow of diplomatic points coming, so you can influence countries if you need to.

Espionage is hard, sometimes. If you really don't feel you'll gain anything from spies, it's fine to leave this unfunded. Later, if you find you're the target of enemy spies, you might change your mind. Change your mind early enough to counteract whatever they're trying to do – don't let them boil you slowly.

The remainder – hopefully the majority – can be allocated to research. You get to research one tech for every full or partial point allocated, though the partial points will take longer to research. See the research chapter for more information on how to prioritize.

Any of these sliders can be changed by clicking and dragging, or by using the "+" or "-" buttons. A newly added feature "increments" these buttons by a percentage (i.e. they'll move faster) if you press the "shift" key while clicking.

DON'T PANIC!

The Technology Interface, and what's generally referred to as the "tech tree," may seem like a confusing jumble of interrelated techs with arrows going this way and that. **It is not as daunting as it seems!** There are simple, logical ways of seeing through the complexity and finding clear paths to researching what you want.

First, establish how many of your leadership points you're going to

direct toward research. At first, this will require some guesswork, and you'll probably make some adjustments, based on changing priorities, once your game is underway. Pick good slider positions for the other categories first, and use what's left for research. Once you pick your "must have" techs to research, you may find you want to reduce other categories in order to meet your research goals.

You have to understand what your country needs – in general – and then decide which of those goals is most important. Make a list in your mind of what your goals must be on the short term, and if you are able to develop a long-term strategic plan, make a list of those too. For every tech you want, you'll then need to get an idea of the prerequisites for that technology.

There's never a reason not to place a tech in the queue as a "placeholder," and maybe that's easier for you than a "mental list" – basically, "I need this tech eventually, and I don't want to forget it, so let's just put it here even though there aren't enough active slots." Reminders are good, plus if you still forget you'll start working on at least one necessary tech even without realizing it. Techs will jump to the end of the list once one level is researched, and so these other techs you've placed in the queue will eventually get some attention. On the other hand, if you have a tech you're researching and you want to immediately start working on the next level, you'll need to pay attention and re-order that item in the queue soon after you finished the earlier level.

Generally, your research priorities will be driven by the kinds of units you have, or the types you want to produce. Longer-term research projects can be inserted into this priority list according to your needs.

UNDERSTANDING THE TECH TREE

It will be good to click through the different category tabs to see what technology projects are covered by each one (categories with direct hardware applications like tanks or planes are on the left, and those which are more theoretical are to the right). Don't be overwhelmed – all will become clear, in time.

Prerequisites are very important to understand – those are the gateways which must be achieved before you are even allowed to research a tech you may want. If a tech isn't available to be researched, the tooltip will show you its prerequisites. If it **is** available, the tooltip will explain what the tech will do – usually showing what values on which units will improve once the tech is researched and those units are upgraded.

Take the Infantry tech category as an example. If you know you want to research and eventually build Mechanised Infantry (like the famous PanzerGrenadiers), there are certain easily understood steps to reaching that goal. Hover your mouse cursor over the tech, and the tooltip will show you that you can't build it yet, but will also show what the prerequisites for that technology are. The process of getting all those techs may seem mystifying or overwhelming at first, because you may not know where each exists in the tech tree. Sometimes it's obvious, other times it's really not. But there are easy-to-understand tools built into the Tech screens to guide you.

For instance, there should be six techs listed as prerequisites for Mechanised Infantry. Motorised Infantry, Medium Tank Brigade, and four Infantry Techs – this all makes sense, because Mechanised Infantry is a merging of the traditional Motorised Infantry concept with armoured concepts in order to make the combination more fearsome. Here's our first step toward demystifying the tech tree. Those four infantry techs?

Look at the tech tree, and notice there's an arrow pointing to Mechanised Infantry from... a grouping of four infantry techs. You'll basically need a certain level of each of those grouped infantry techs before you can proceed. Plus, if you trace the other arrows from those four techs, you'll find that these techs are also what allow you to build Marine Infantry. That's a fringe benefit like you'll find often in the tech tree.

What else? Motorised Infantry is right above Mechanised. Notice the stubby little arrow pointing from Motorised Infantry to Mechanised which indicates the relationship. But if you don't already have Motorised Infantry researched, you'll have to get there, first. Which means you must reach a certain level of the Cavalry techs – the set of four with the arrow pointing to Motorised.

The last prerequisite requires you to look at the techs listed under the Armoured tab. Once you locate Medium Tank Brigade, you'll see an arrow pointing to it from a set of four Light Tank techs, which are the ones you'll have to research if you don't already have Medium Tank Brigades. Another fringe benefit – once you've achieved the Medium Tank Brigade, you may also begin researching Self-Propelled Artillery Brigades, which allows you to build Tank Destroyers.

And that is the whole tree – the "roots" which allow you to build Mechanised Infantry. All in all, that's twelve "component techs" – the ones which are grouped together, with each one contributing a component to existing units (most techs you research will improve your unit stats, provided you're funding upgrades), but which all must be researched to follow the arrow to the next major tech. Plus, you must also have those major techs researched – the Medium Tank Brigade and Motorised Infantry. Finally, you must research the Mechanised Infantry tech, too, which you're allowed to do once you have all the others researched. Those 15 techs might seem like a lot, but so's the ultimate payoff. Hopefully this explanation helps you see the simplicity of how the tree is built.

The progress bar for a tech displayed on the main technology interface (i.e. not in the research queue) shows its total progress through all possible levels. This will give you an idea of how advanced you've become in that technology area.

Sometimes, you might notice that a tech has a **negative** effect on your units! For instance, an aircraft engine tech might increase the speed of your planes, but also reduce their range. Or a tank engine tech might improve its speed, but reduce its toughness (survivability) in battle. These are tradeoffs representing either higher fuel consumption (the planes) or increased chance of breakdown (the tanks). Generally, there's another tech which will counterbalance the other, and so the combined effect of both will make your units appreciably better.

It's often wise to be researching at least one "doctrine" tech at all times. Doctrines are how you shape your military to fight most effectively using the tactics you prefer to use, and your doctrines may be entirely different from your enemy's. These tabs are all at the far right of the technology screen, along the top. The one which adds organisation to your units is your likely first choice.

Air doctrines are grouped according to type of aircraft – close air support, interceptors, bombers, etc. Naval doctrines are in three main categories. Land doctrines are divided into four major categories, or "lines of doctrinal thought." Usually, if your country is more advanced in one grouping, compared to the rest, that's the doctrinal path most likely to fit your country's strengths. But look at the explanations as described in the tooltips, and make your own decision.

THEORY AND PRACTICAL

Another thing you should consider as you plan your research is which practical and theoretical knowledge category you both, draw from, and benefit in. Each technology is made harder or easier to research based on your theoretical and practical knowledge in the relevant fields (shown by icons on the left of each tech). Continuing to research things using this same category of knowledge will enable you to research more techs in less time. Meanwhile, those techs you successfully research will provide you with a benefit in a certain theoretical technology (shown by an icon on the right side of the tech), which helps you to research such techs in the future.

As an example, if you build single-engine aircraft, you will develop a higher degree of practical knowledge in Single-Engine Techs (airframe, engine, etc.), because your production adds to your practical knowledge. This practical knowledge will not help you build better four-engine aircraft – only single-engine. However, researching certain aeronautical theories which you will need to produce single-engine aircraft (such as Basic Aircraft Machine Gun) will also make it possible for you to build better four-engine aircraft.

Plus, production affects technology. The more you produce, the better your practical knowledge in that area will be, which will speed your research into other techs in that category, because you learn as you gain more experience in operating those units or technologies.

“When researching, do not overlook the Theoretical Advances. They are a good way to elevate your theory and shorten the research time of more difficult techs. Focus your research and keep with it. Decay means that if you start and stop your research and production, it will end up costing you more in the long run. I’ll re-iterate my earlier comment that focus, and this means a strategy, is very important because of the decay. Going in and out of tech areas can greatly increase your overall cost. In general, from what I have seen, you want to get your tech skill up to about 8, and then keep researching in that area to hold it. You’ll generally get a nice bonus to your research speed and make nice steady progress. For most countries you want infantry, artillery, mobile, and auto. Mechanised and aviation are also frequently nice.”

– Tony Cristanelli (PaxMondo), Phoenix, Arizona

CHOOSING TECHS

When researching, you cannot do everything unless your country’s leadership pool is remarkably strong. The United States, for instance, and Germany in some scenarios, may have the ability to basically research everything available.

However, most countries will have to make strategic choices as to what they’ll concentrate on. Do you focus on medium tanks rather than heavy tanks? On tactical bombers, rather than fighters? Most countries will have to choose one or the other, because they cannot possibly afford to effectively research both with the relatively small amounts of leadership points they have to play with.

When choosing which techs to research, go through first and locate which techs you really know you need to accomplish to benefit the strategy you would prefer to use. It may be, after looking at the realities of the tech world, you will have to change your strategy. Maybe air flotillas of strategic bombers are entirely beyond your reach! But pick the things

you will need eventually – many of these things, in early scenarios, may be grayed out because they’re beyond your reach. So check the tooltip, follow the arrows backward, and find which techs are prerequisites for the things you need. Research those things.

Even between broader categories of research fields, hard choices must be made. Break these down, basically, into land, air and naval techs, plus industrial techs and land/air/naval doctrines. Secret techs might be considered another one. Five or six very broad categories. Germany, in most scenarios, can concentrate on three or four of these, and most major powers can make progress in two or three. But if Germany chooses to build a strong navy, she’s going to have to choose another broad category to ignore – which will it be? These are important questions, and the earlier in the game you answer them, the more successful your research efforts will ultimately be.

The most obvious technology strategy is to start from the earliest tech dates and work forward. This will avoid the serious (50 percent) penalty for “ahead-of-time” research. However, some exceptions may be necessary to meet your personal objectives in time for when you expect they may need to be used.

Go through the tech screens and find which techs have a start date of the current year or before. At each stop, evaluate whether that’s a tech you want or not, and then consider whether it’s a need or just a want. This will give you a set of techs to immediately place in the queue, and to research in sequence. If your list is longer than your available research slots, then start researching and wait for the techs to be achieved before you add more. The techs you’ve researched to the first level will go to the end of the list, and you’ll want to see if they’re also at your current start year or before to see if you want to continue researching them.

When you’re improving “resource techs” – those techs which allow you greater production of a resource – see what you produce the most of. If there’s a high enough demand for that resource on the world market, such that you can sell it to make a profit, that may be what you want to research first. Obviously, if you’re desperately short of a resource, that’s going to be your first choice, unless you somehow think the increase in the one resource will allow you to get enough money to correct your shortages through trade. Researching industrial techs has an opportunity cost, just like committing IC to construct new factories – there are other things you could be researching instead. However, there is less potential cost to researching at least certain industrial techs because the rewards are almost always worth the investment of a research slot.

Preparing for winter through the research of winter gear can become very important. Later on, consider the night vision tech, which may enable your troops to fight at a higher effectiveness at night than your enemy – not a small advantage!

If you intend to build a navy – if it’s integral – research early because it will take a while to build on the basis of what your research gives you

Researching techs which improve morale, such as ground crew training and other doctrine techs, will ultimately improve your repair rate so your units will be able to rejoin combat sooner.

WHAT NOT TO RESEARCH

If you’re trying to keep garrisons (militia), cavalry and infantry all updated in technology, you may end up spinning your wheels. Unless you have tech slots to spare, you should consider specializing. Also, as a major power, there’s no reason to research militia techs unless you have militia

or garrisons, and you're expecting to need them for defensive purposes.

Keep in mind that researching a new tank gun for medium tanks may not actually be of any use if you lack the IC to upgrade the units you have, or if you lack the IC and/or manpower to build the medium tanks in the first place. Always plan ahead in this respect, and be realistic about whether your research will actually cause a real improvement to your military situation, or if there are other things more likely to help you out.

If you find that you do not have the IC or manpower to realistically make use of the techs that you'd like to research – either you can't build the units, or you lack IC to upgrade the ones you have – you can always place your research priorities on doctrines which will improve almost any military machine without a cost of IC or manpower.

The Atom Bomb is often beyond the reach of most countries. **Don't get fixated on it!** You may find, in the long run, that what nuclear weapons could do for you could have been achieved by conventional weapons more quickly than if you concentrated all your efforts to get "the bomb." The sheer amount of research time and mental focus required to get Nuclear Bombs may well be better focused somewhere else, where it will bear more fruit. But if you're serious about it, it's critically important that you start working toward it on day one of your campaign, and keep going along a carefully laid path. The tech tree is very specific as to what you'll need, and you need to diagram those things and check each step off as you complete it. Then you'll automatically know what your next step is once you get there.

WHEN TO RESEARCH

An alert will help you keep track, but don't research a lot of techs that are 2-5 years beyond your reach.

Pay close attention to the "start year" – the date on each tech which indicates when it can be researched without penalties to the amount of time to research (which can be as high as 50 percent!).

For instance, Germany **can** research Advanced Aircraft Design in 1936, but it's rated as a 1940 tech, and so Germany will spend more time and research points on that project than if he'd waited until 1940. On the other hand, if he does research it, he will be able to achieve it by 1937.

While there are certainly a number of techs which are important enough that you should consider researching them before their start date, others will cost you too much of your research effort in the long run, and it would be more productive for you to concentrate on techs closer within your reach.

Sometimes, researching ahead may be a wise strategic choice. If Germany can get ahead of everybody in a field... So two or three "ahead of time" techs are okay for certain countries, if you've got the research points for them. Five or six is stretching it – there's other stuff to research which may be more immediately beneficial.

When you're evaluating whether to research a tech beyond your current technology, try to formulate a plan for when you'll develop that tech, if not now. If you can't figure out a good time to develop it, now might be a great time. If you can fit it into a logical plan for when you'll have what, then you're set.



PRODUCING THE MACHINES OF WAR

“I want to make it clear that it is the purpose of the nation to build now with all possible speed every machine, every arsenal, every factory that we need to manufacture our defense material. We have the men, the skill, the wealth, and above all, the will. ... As planes and ships and guns and shells are produced, your government, with its defense experts, can then determine how best to use them to defend this hemisphere. The decision as to how much shall be sent abroad and how much shall remain at home must be made on the basis of our overall military necessities. We must be the great arsenal of democracy.”

– President Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 29, 1940

UNDERSTANDING THE PRODUCTION QUEUE

When evaluating costs, in terms of IC for production, remember the real cost is the daily point cost **multiplied** by the amount of time it will take to finish. For instance, a ship that costs 4 IC per day will actually cost 1460 “IC days” over the course of a full year. Compare that to a light armoured unit which may cost more daily IC, but only takes 180 days to finish, which equals 1240 “IC days.” If you’re short on manpower, you should also take into account the manpower needs of each construction. Research projects can be evaluated the same way, as a project that takes up one research slot for 90 days is going to be 3 times “cheaper” than a tech which takes 270 days. You could actually research three lesser techs in the same amount of time – is it worth it? It’s important to keep these “hidden” tradeoffs in mind.

You do not always have to finish a unit you have in production. In fact, sometimes it’s a good idea not to. You can complete most of the components (i.e. finish most of its construction time), and then leave it incomplete until you know you really need it. This may be considered somewhat “gamey” – and it is, if you take it too far – but there are often situations in government where you will postpone a project until later, and pick up where it left off. Some players may make use of this concept.

DIVISION BUILDER

The standard number of Brigades you can have in a division is four, although technology can allow you to increase that number. That said, there is nothing wrong with divisions of two or three brigades, and depending on your circumstances, it may actually be a better decision. The minimum number of men (manpower) to make a division is 5,000.

Set up your production templates before the game begins. Pick different

styles of division that you’re likely to want to build at some point. When constructing divisions, it’s important to get a number of balances correct.

The first balance is between combat units and support units. Support units like artillery will add to the combat value of a unit without adding to the combat width – the “frontal presence” of the unit. Ideally, because of the mathematics involved, it’s best to have divisions with a combat width of three, or four, or a paired mixture of four/five (this combination is explained later). That allows more divisions on a typical battlefield, whereas other combinations of widths might limit you to less. The division designer allows you to have units with four or even five brigades with the appropriate tech levels.

The other important balance is “combined arms,” which is a measure of its “softness.” Combined arms provides a bonus if you have enough units with a mixture of armoured and “soft” units like infantry.

You may want to build some standard divisions – infantry, heavy armoured, etc. – and then have other divisions that are more specialized. Say, a division with two infantry brigades, an artillery brigade and an engineer brigade. Such a unit might be better suited, for instance, for attacking a city. Only specialize if you really know how to use the unit, and it’s worth creating for that purpose. You could create one temporarily, by combining detached specialist brigades, and then take them out once their purpose is done.

Remember, when producing your Divisions in the Division Builder box (and even when combining units after the fact), that Paratroop units, in order to be effectively used in their intended role, must always be kept separate from other units. If you have a mixed unit, and you want to do a Paratroop, you would have to strip out all the non-Paratroop Brigades in order to do it. It’s more sensible to keep them all together – full Paratroop

Divisions, with 2 or 3 or 4 identical Brigades apiece.

You will need to include at least one combat brigade, or else your whole Division will melt like butter if it's ever caught in combat (the division builder will not allow you to create a division without at least one, but you may need to remember this if you're combining detached brigades).

"There are many factors to consider when designing divisions. You should keep in mind what you will be using the division for: Divisions for defending narrow gaps should be different from divisions designed for large scale blitzkrieg attacks."

– Tuomas Tirronen (Letar), Helsinki, Finland

See the chart in the appendix of this guide for more information about how different brigade types compare to each other, and how each improves over time with technology.

APPLYING THEORY & PRACTICAL

Production in an ignored field will be far less efficient than familiar ones until your economy reorients toward the new field. Thus, balanced IC spending will avoid the penalties, and will result in far more efficient production and research on the long term.

The process of decay occurs relatively fast, and if you don't keep up in building units which use a certain tech, they may have to re-learn that practical knowledge.

STRATEGIC TIMING

Don't start building level 2 tanks if you're going to research level 3 soon. Wait for model improvements and then build. It's always possible to upgrade once you've researched the new techs, but that actually takes longer than simply building from scratch, and it's a hassle. There are circumstances where you'd still want to do that, though, such as when you're in desperate need for that unit, and it's more important to you that you have a soft attack of 4 or 5, rather than a SA 6 later on.

MATCHING PRODUCTION TO STRATEGY (& DOCTRINES)

Build your divisions around your strategy. If your strategic situation is likely to allow battles of maneuver, where speed and encirclements can happen, then you'd be wise to build armoured divisions. However, if your battles are more likely to take place in jungle, or mountains, armoured units would be at a disadvantage. Infantry would be preferable.

Air and naval strategy works the same way. If you're going to be unable to contest for control of the high seas, it's not wise to build an aircraft carrier, because it would have to be protected by other heavy units – it's not suited for raiding, like submarines are. Light cruisers or battlecruisers might work, but they would have to operate individually, not as a group, or else they would stand too much of a risk of being cornered while raiding convoys. If your strategy will be primarily to use airpower against troops in the field, not against enemy cities, then you should not spend a lot of effort on strategic bombers, which are typically most useful en masse. One strategic bomber wing cannot effectively reduce the enemy's industrial capacity, whereas six or twelve could. But are those six or twelve airwings of strategic bombers worth the "opportunity cost" of not building twenty tactical bomber wings instead, which would be more useful on the battlefield?

If you already have some units around, and you don't like how they're constructed, HOI 3 makes it easy for you to reorganise them and mix and match their brigades so that you have what you want. Send any brigades you don't find useful into the interior of your country to act as garrisons. Obviously, if they're non-combat brigades, or even in most cases if they would remain as detached brigades, it's always a good idea to find or create another combat brigade to pair them with so they have the defensive strength of a division structure.

WHAT TO CONCENTRATE ON

See the chart at the end of this Strategy Guide for comparisons of different types of brigades over time.

Don't underestimate infantry – it has its strengths and weaknesses. But even if tanks are useful on the steppes of the Soviet Union or on the deserts of North Africa, you still need infantry for many portions of Russia, Africa, etc. Infantry is very useful anywhere other more mechanised units have difficulty. It's also very valuable on defense.

An aggressive power fighting intercontinentally needs paratroops at some point unless they have a strong navy.

Cavalry is useful for spread out and mountainous countries. Light armour could accomplish the same as cavalry, except that it would use fuel, which might not be available in sufficient quantities in some countries. Cavalry becomes the fast scouting units of the minors who cannot afford armoured cars or heavier, or who cannot afford or access fuel for offensive vehicles.

Look at brigade cost effectiveness – you may be able to construct a massive division with awesome combat abilities... but can you "feed" it? Can you supply it with manpower and/or fuel? Be careful of fuel requirements, because lack of fuel can halt these units and basically remove them from your arsenal.

Some brigade types are better off if they're paired with other brigades. For instance, some types of armour are relatively vulnerable in some ways, such that they will be more effective if they have some infantry or a different type of armoured brigade together with them in the same division.

BUILDING INSTALLATIONS

Both constructing industrial improvements and researching industrial techs are more valuable to your country the earlier they're done. Building a factory in 1942, for instance, benefits you six years' less productive capacity than if you'd built it in 1936.

Do you want to concentrate your factories in single provinces, where strategic bombers can hit them all at once, but where you can also stack a legion of anti-aircraft batteries? Or will it be better for you to space them out so they take up a great deal of the enemy's attention to hit them all? Both are valid strategies, depending on the situation. Only concentrate your IC if you can protect it with AA. Obviously, when you're building new factories, it's a good idea to place them in areas where the enemy might not have the range to hit. Check your stats for strategic bombers and get an idea of how far the enemy's can fly from the airbases they have.

Everyone wants to have jet planes and nuclear bombs, but what do you have to produce to get there? Do you have the spare industry to spend 30 IC on a rocket test platform, or 75 IC on a nuclear reactor? If you can develop the tech in time, these are great options for building in the pre-war years, so you can concentrate that block of IC on more military projects during



A German 88mm anti-tank gun guarded the approaches to Rimini, Italy, in September 1944. Picture taken by George Kaye, and used by permission of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, NZ.

THE “MOST FEARED” GERMAN WEAPON

The German 8.8 cm FlaK (for Flugzeugabwehr-Kanone) was a light artillery gun commonly referred to by Allied soldiers as a “German 88” because of its 88 millimeter shell size. Designed as a high-level anti-aircraft weapon, it has perhaps become more famous for the terror it caused to tank crewmen in Spain, North Africa, the Soviet Union, Italy and France. Its high muzzle velocity made it deadly efficient at punching through even the heaviest tank armour in “direct fire” mode (i.e. shooting as a rifle would, not by lobbing a shell as artillery often does). It could fire three shells per minute.

Application: As in real life, anti-aircraft brigades in HOI 3 can also be employed in an anti-tank role. If you’re wanting both anti-air and anti-tank qualities in your division, you can assign an anti-air brigade and get some of both. The anti-aircraft carriage & sights tech will improve anti-aircraft brigades’ hard attack gradually, which already starts with an anti-tank value. This cannot take the place of dedicated anti-tank brigades, which still pack a greater punch, and which can be improved far faster through their own techs.

the war, yet you still get the benefit of having these installations around to enable research and production of these items once you have the tech.

Airbase positioning is important. When you build and deploy an airbase, know the range of the planes you want to base there.

Positioning of new naval bases is important, not because it matters to the ships very much, but because by placing a naval base anywhere along your coast you’re inviting an invasion force to that spot. Can you defend the province where you’re placing it?

Space radar stations out so that they don’t cover the same areas. If you intend to build them beyond level one, take this into consideration

when you place your first stations. Position them like you might design a minefield – place them where the enemy is likely to have to cross over them no matter what route they take to your important cities or targets.

AIR PRODUCTION

If you’re on a budget, and you can’t build both tactical bombers and close air support, which do you build? Don’t be fooled by the better soft attack values of the early tactical bombers. IC cost for IC cost, close air support is actually the same with soft targets, and better against hard targets, **plus** gets better ratings against ships! The limitation on CAS is range,



LICENSE-BUILT APACHES

The airplane most WW II history buffs know as the P-51 Mustang actually started its service with the Royal Air Force as the A-36 Apache. Ordered and paid for by the RAF, built in the United States and shipped over, these aircraft proved valuable enough that the USAAF ordered some too, and the rest is history. The model shown above is a later production line, and was probably referred to as a Mustang.

Application: By taking advantage of purchased production licenses, you can build aircraft and other types of units which you don't have the technical knowledge to produce yourself, or which are superior models to the ones you have. Because of the costs, be cautious before you decide this is the way to go, but in a number of circumstances (especially for minor countries) this allows you flexibility that wouldn't otherwise exist.

Licensing maybe a good idea for smaller countries without the ability or leadership pool to effectively research some techs. You still have to build the unit yourself, and they're sometimes fairly expensive, but if you're in a position where you need to consider this option, it's probably worth it.

where they fall very short. However, they have the benefit of extending their range using single-engine techs, so they'll advance as your fighters and interceptors do. If that's where your focus is, CAS may be your best choice. If you have to reach out to bomb distant targets, then forget it.

Only build naval bombers if you really intend to use them against ships a lot. The tactical bomber is a much more versatile aircraft. Remember, if you need to,

If you try building a large number of airwings without also increasing the size or number of airbases may put you in the awkward situation of not being able to effectively use all your shiny new planes. Increase the operational size of your airbases in areas where you're likely to need them, and be ready to prepare small "forward airfields" as you advance your lines.

NAVAL PRODUCTION

In certain circumstances, there may be a cost savings for using a more obsolete component; after all, the latest Technology may be very expensive or may take longer to build.

Begin building your navy's ships early, because they will take a long time to build. This means researching early, too, so the ships you're building are not obsolete.

LICENSING FOREIGN PRODUCTION MODELS

Licenses don't give you the technical knowledge directly, but it does build your overall knowledge (having built the item), which may help you to develop that tech in the future.

Licenses can be costly, plus afterward you're still without the knowledge base to build one yourself. However, having built one, your knowledge increases, which may help you develop that tech in the future. Your options for what to request may be limited, and your chances of convincing them to let you build may be even more limited.

INTELLIGENCE & ESPIONAGE

“The Soviet Union’s most striking intelligence successes during the Great Patriotic War ... were achieved not against its enemies but against its allies in the wartime Grand Alliance: Britain and the United States.”

– KGB Veteran Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield*

Espionage can be a major tool against other countries, even during peacetime. Other forms of intelligence can be important too, because it allows you to detect neighbors’ intentions, to some degree.

INTELLIGENCE LEVELS

You will have level 9 intelligence upon all of your provinces, but also on provinces where you’re attacking.

You have level 3 intelligence on border provinces in enemy or neutral territory, and moving aircraft or other units through enemy territory will allow you level 2 intelligence on provinces adjacent to their movement.

Ships offshore will gain level 2 intelligence on provinces bordering their seazone. You can also improve your intelligence levels by assigning spies in a country to conduct Military Intelligence. This can tell you what their force levels are (roughly), and occasionally you may see where a certain unit is stationed.

Remember, your intelligence from spies, signals, or lower-level observation (level 3, for instance) can be wrong, wrong, **wrong**! You may think you’re facing just two divisions, and your attack may find five. Or the opposite is possible – you might have an easy time against a force you thought was much larger. You also don’t know what is behind the lines unless you’re scouting with air units.

Scout out enemy provinces with ships or planes before you send an invasion force into a landing site, or if you need to know where your enemy’s units are for any other reason.

Remember your combats, if you can. Remember what you faced, what special brigades were attached to the units, who the leaders were. These types of information may come in handy later if you face these units again. Learn from the enemy and use your knowledge to defeat him. Even the computer AI may use different tactics from country to country (and from patch to patch).

When the enemy starts to move, depending on your level of intelligence, you may see red arrows indicating the approximate direction of their travel.



The level 5 radar station at Dover can see about 4 or 5 provinces into German-occupied France and Belgium, providing level 3 intelligence on most of it, and level 2 on the periphery. Part of this information is from the radar itself, but this also includes information gathered through signals intelligence, which is why you see units (this information can be wrong, or even manipulated).

RECONNAISSANCE BY FIRE

There’s a military technique called “reconnaissance by fire,” where a small unit moves forward and attempts to draw the enemy’s fire, thereby exposing what resources the enemy has. This concept works in HOI 3 – you may move a single division forward into a brief skirmish.

By ordering an attack along the border, which you can stop after one hour with little consequence, you will have discovered what enemy units are present (you **did** look at the battle interface before stopping the combat, didn’t you?), and you will have gained level 9 intelligence on that province. After one hour, you won’t have lost much of your strength,

INTREPID BRITISH “SECURITY COORDINATION” & THE TRANSATLANTIC BOND



A little known operation of the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI-6) took place within the United States, starting in 1940, where British and American internationalists alike, including President Roosevelt, recognized that the survival of the British Empire might very well hinge on the willingness of the people of the United States to go to war against Germany. So was born the British Security Coordination (BSC) – a half-public, half-secret public relations, propaganda and disinformation effort run by a handful of British associate agents. They mingled at public events and elite private parties, chatted over drinks with editors and politicians, planted news stories and dropped hints to influential government leaders, all of which tended to turn the American people and government against Germany, as well as building respect and sympathy for the United Kingdom.

Some of the more noteworthy agents in this line of work later went on to become famous writers, including William Stephenson, who became known by his MI-6 codename, **Intrepid**, the playwright Noel Coward, and Roald Dahl, who popularized a species of mythical gnome-monsters called “gremlins,” and who also wrote **James and the Giant Peach** and **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory** (later known in movie form as **Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory**). Perhaps the best known of these propagandists was Ian Fleming, who went on to write and produce the **James Bond** franchise of books and movies.

Application: Placing spies in your own or allied countries may seem silly. But they do provide a valuable counter-intelligence role, catching enemy spies. They may also be worth their weight in gold by doing things to manipulate your population in order to build support for your policies. Spies in allied countries can support their ruling parties against enemy interference. Internal spies can support the ruling party (You!), raise national unity, or they can be used to lower neutrality, which can help you to mobilize in your own defense, or permit your string of glorious conquests to begin!

even if the combat was at outrageous odds. You will have lost your entrenchment, which may or may not be important to you.

DECIDE YOUR SPY PRIORITIES

Where you concentrate your spies will be determined by your Risk Assessment. There's no reason to have spies in a country you don't care about. But you have to be sure who you **should** care about (i.e. who potentially poses a threat to you, or even who you wish to pose a threat to).

If spies are at capacity in a country (i.e. at 10), you're wasting leadership producing more. Shift that leadership into other priorities. Sort by the number of spies to see if your spy assignments match your priorities, and drop the assignment priority if it's too high.

If you have more than one spy in a small country that you're not ready to attack, that's probably enough. Set priority to zero, and check back occasionally to make sure you haven't lost the guy you had there. You always have the option of changing message settings to notify you when a spy is caught, but if you've got a lot of spies in the field during wartime, this may start to seem more like spam than useful information.

If you set too many countries as priorities for spy assignments, none of them will get much attention. The quickest way to increase the number of spies in a country is to set them to top priority, and drop everybody else to level 1 (red) or zero.

Remember you can use a quick trick to adjust your spy priority settings – use left-click to increase the rate of spies to that country, and right-click to reduce. It's easiest to adjust your priorities if you order the list according to existing priorities, and decide which ones are set correctly and which aren't.

MISSIONS

If no specific Mission is set for Spies in a country, those Spies will perform some of each of these types of Missions, randomly. It's actually preferable

at times to leave them unassigned, as you'll maybe discover something you didn't know you wanted to know. Obviously, this is more likely to be useful during peacetime, when you don't have more urgent missions for them (and when you probably have more time to pay attention to what your spies are finding). A similar alternative would be to switch your spies back and forth between different missions during peacetime (this can work during war too, though you may prefer to watch military information) so you can get a broader idea of the selected range of issues. If you have time to micromanage this, it's actually more effective than setting to “none” because a spy set to none is actually “laying low” and not actively gathering intelligence.

If you're trying to get into a war (for offensive or defensive purposes), you can use spies internally to reduce your neutrality or raise your national unity (important for some mobilization steps). Externally, you can use an array of spy missions, including disrupting research or production. Supporting rebels is not likely to be useful during peacetime, and neither is supporting “our party.” But lowering an enemy's national unity can be useful in preventing certain necessary steps toward mobilization. It can't absolutely prevent war, but it can help prevent their preparedness for war by keeping them from getting military or industrial forces completely prepared.

Unless you're intentionally manipulating a country's political situation, there's not much point to the political espionage setting, because it's merely passive. You may try setting it every once in a while just to see if there's an opportunity to back a rival party, just to see what havoc that might cause.

The tech espionage mission allows you to see what their research priorities are. This is useful as a “one-shot” glimpse, but once you've observed it and assessed what they're aiming for, they're not likely to change priorities entirely. You might look once per year, just to get an idea of their strategic thinking.

COUNTER-ESPIONAGE & COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE

Sometimes it's as easy to neutralize spies from their home country as in your own. If one particular enemy is pestering you, set your spies at home to counter-espionage missions, and also send counter-espionage missions into their own territory. Double-team them!

If your opponents are doing something clever with their spies (either to you, or you may be able to detect their "hand" in another country, too), you can keep them busy at home by massively targeting them in ways they care about. This is more likely to attract the attention of a multiplayer opponent than the AI, but it's worth trying in any case. Try sending spies to kill their spies (counter-espionage), or to disrupt their production, or lower national unity, etc. Do something they have to respond to, and they may have to change the focus of their own spies and try to counter your moves instead.

OTHER FORMS OF INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

Don't get fixated on spies. There are other intelligence options too.

You cannot fly over other countries during peacetime, and so you may be limited to spying. But if you have time to develop radar technology during peacetime, it may give you a whole new outlook on where threats are coming from – who, when and where.



“The army is like a peacock. Nearly all tail.”

– British Prime Minister Winston Churchill

Logistics are an important part of any major operation. You have to make sure your divisions have enough supplies to begin the offensive efficiently, and you must ensure when they get where you sent them, they have enough supplies and fuel to hold the territory and keep on going.

INFRASTRUCTURE & THROUGHPUT

Infrastructure is a measure of how “built up” the territory is and, more to the point, how easy it is to transport military forces or supplies through the province. A simple “line-of-sight” to your supply source does not guarantee a unit will be in supply – there has to be sufficient “throughput” (which is supported by infrastructure) to allow enough supplies to get through for all the units reliant upon those roads or railways.

Yes, you can stack 100 divisions in one province, but if you do they’ll start losing strength because you can only supply a few of them. Units which can’t get supplies cannot fight attrition with reinforcements, nor may they recover organisation, if they’ve recently been in battle.

Units in countries which have low infrastructure will constantly be fighting to get enough supplies. On the long-term, the way to improve this is by building higher infrastructure, or building higher level naval bases if the theatre is overseas. On the short term, more highly skilled commanders at the corps level, and higher throughput technology may help. Sometimes, just letting units in a region rest may allow them to

regain their supply, because units which are sitting still use supplies at a slower rate than those in combat. Another option would be to open a new source of supply nearby, which uses different the throughput from new provinces to transport supplies. This might be done by capturing a new naval base, or even constructing one along a friendly shore.

Long term combat strategy requires strong infrastructure channels through your country which can be used to get your armies where they need to go. Invasions of another country are made easier by strong infrastructure there, as well. On the other hand, you always run the risk of allowing your enemies to use your infrastructure against you if you are on the defensive. You should build infrastructure in areas you feel are secure, but where you expect to need to support large numbers of divisions. Once captured enemy territory becomes secure, it would be good to improve the infrastructure there, too.

The rate at which your units repair is also dependent partly upon the infrastructure in the province where it is. However, unlike previous games, the rate of resource production in a province can only be improved through technology.

Be especially careful while using “forward airbases,” where the base is very close to the front lines, because these bases will draw upon the same supply throughput as the units at the front. You may find your air units and your land units are interfering with each others’ supply.

SUPPLY WINS WARS

In the old television show **Hogan’s Heroes**, Germans often feared reassignment to the Eastern Front. Why was this a threat? Partly because it was cold, and troops were often not well supplied. The Germans had planned to invade the Soviet Union in the spring of 1941, and expected the conquest to be complete before the coming of winter. What they didn’t anticipate was needing to intervene in Italy’s war against Greece, which required the invasion of Yugoslavia too, as the only direct means of travel to Greece for the number of troops they needed. Like previous German campaigns, rapid success reinforced the feeling that every conquest could be completed in a short number of months. It built confidence for the now-delayed invasion of Russia. But the generals had not expected to need winter clothing, so none was available. When the USSR fought the German tanks to a standstill just short of their objectives, German soldiers on the Eastern Front were faced with frigid temperatures while wearing summer uniforms. Just that first winter, about 100,000 German soldiers froze to death, or were sent home with frostbite..



A truck of the US Army’s “Red Ball Express” mired in mud.

SUPPLY MAPMODE (NEW & REVISED!)

The Supply Mapmode has gotten quite a bit more informative since the Manual was written, but some explanation is in order (a great deal of thanks to Mark Potter, aka Potski, for making this clear)...

Lots of green = good, lots of red = bad. Each province has a supply demand and a supply throughput figure. If the demand is the same as the throughput then it is green (full supply). If the throughput is zero, then it is red (no supply). If there is some throughput, but less than the demand, then it is brown (partial supply). If there are supplies in a province, but no demand for them, then it is blue (spare supply). This happens most often when supplies have been stockpiled at an airbase, then suddenly are all left behind with no airwings requiring them when the wings are rebased. These slowly recover back into the system, they are not wasted.

Superimposed on this for some provinces is red hatching. This shows where there is some limitation being imposed by the infra level. There is a complicated formula which I can't remember off the top of my head which sets a maximum throughput for all provinces based on their infra level, which can be modified by certain techs and I think Ministers.

For high infra provinces, such as those in East Prussia (Danzig is lvl 10), it is unusual to see the supplies passing through them being limited. But these may have to go "round the corner" in the Baltic Sea toward Leningrad, so the supply lines tend to all have to bunch up through a small number of provinces in this area.

You may see an area in Russia/Ukraine where there is red hatching, where supplies are not getting through very well – this is the Pripjat Marshes. If you flick across in to infra mapmode you see this area clearly.

Supply tax can be a serious drain on your Supply stockpile, so as your empire grows or as your armies move into enemy territory, your supply needs will gradually increase. It will get worse if rain or melting snow is causing mud along your routes. Supply is easier through provinces you own, (i.e. not in occupied territory).

If you're having systemic supply problems, like armies in Russian or Chinese territory often do, attacking only makes the problem worse, because it increases the draw on supplies. Resolve your supply issues first, and then attack. If there's no way to effectively solve the issue, then attack sparingly or invest your attack strength into trying to open better supply routes.

If you're wandering around behind enemy lines, it's possible to capture enemy supplies and make use of them yourself. You may collect those supplies moving through the province at that moment, or you may even be able to capture an enemy depot.

It's sometimes useful to take just a few days to prepare an army for a new offensive, because if you've just moved forward it's going to take a couple of days for the supply lines to adjust and fully prepare you to move forward unless you are willing to do so without a fully established supply line. Your units may also need to refill their 30-day reserves, and this period does well to restore any strength or organisation they may have fallen behind on, too.

STRATEGIC REDEPLOYMENT

Land units using strategic redeployment will move at what's essentially a speed of 20, modified by the infrastructure level. They will lose 1 point of organisation every day. Supply costs will be double.

Theoretically, there is an infrastructure-based cap on strategic redeployment, because these units will still need supply (in fact, they will need more of it) to travel along their route. However, they will not need fuel, which may be a useful point.

Consider using strategic redeployment to move your units if you're short on fuel. Not only is it faster, but it also costs you supplies, rather than fuel. You can SR most places, including into combat, though that's risky because you also lose organisation. You can come to just within

range, though, and then move forward.

SR reduces the organization of your units, so they will not be as prepared to fight. Because of this it's a bad idea to use strategic redeployment to carry your units straight into combat. But there's no rule against it, and at times it may seem a useful tactic to get your units into combat more quickly.

NAVAL BASES & SUPPLY

The size of the naval base determines how much supply may be shipped in or out, so it may be you will need more than one naval base to supply certain areas.

When you're expanding onto other continents or across an island chain, it's a good idea to produce a number of level 1 naval bases to place along your way. This will enable you to distribute supplies from more than one source, and the supplies can come from different directions, so the supply lines don't all conflict with each other in a big traffic jam.



“Damned if I’m not about ready to quit! If I could just command a battalion, and get into a bullet battle, it would all be so simple.”

– Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower in North Africa, December 17, 1942

DON'T PANIC!

Even the best commander can become overwhelmed – too much information, conflicting goals, seemingly impossible situations, etc.

MANAGING HQS

Headquarters represent your way to avoid all the micromanagement presented by the sheer number of units in HOI 3. It's meant to help you manage your armies without becoming overloaded. It's customizable, so you can take on as much responsibility, or as little, as you want.

HQs allow the player to shunt off less important theatres to AI control, freeing you to concentrate on important battles, the management of your economy, or whatever. The AI is no substitute for intelligent control by a player, so keep an eye on it and be ready to issue “corrective action.” But wise and selective use of the HQs under AI command can actually be a great benefit to you. In fact, some feedback from beta-testing indicated players were impressed by how well the HQ intelligence managed a battlefield.

You can carefully manage the Theatres, telling them when to attack and where, using the stances and the axis of attack commands. Watch closely, and detach units which are “going off the reservation” so that you don't allow the AI to make unwise decisions for you. Alternatively, you can manage the HQs below Theatre level, and direct individual corps and armies for more limited goals which you select yourself.

The only way for you to exercise “fine control” over how each unit moves is to remove the AI control, and not use your HQs as command devices. The HQs still benefit your units by adding combat bonuses from your commanders, but you're controlling their troops from your commander's chair, not through the filter of an HQ commander. The HQ AI command is a tool which you can use, if you want to. It allows you to move whole armies and corps as a unit, but won't allow you the freedom to make minor adjustments to individual units under that command unless you take the AI control off.

“HQ's are not built in the Production Screen, but are instantly created from a button on the unit interface for any unit below Army Group level which is not already attached to an HQ. They appear to be free,

but they require: 1) Leadership, 100 officers 2) MP and IC to bring them up to full-strength. An HQ requires more IC days than a Brigade of Infantry, but their combat stats are not as good, so do not create more than you need. You can maximize the efficiency of your HQ's by arranging your forces with five Divisions in each Corps, and five Corps in each Army.”

– Mark Potter (Potski), Durham, UK

Theatres, unlike the Manual says, cannot be created by the player, though other HQs can be. However, the player can tell the AI when to re-assess which Theatres need to be there, where the boundaries should be, and which units will be assigned to each. This reallocation is ordered through buttons at the bottom of the Production Interface.

ORGANIZING YOUR ARMIES & HQS

If you really want to impose control over your units before combat, you'd be best advised to start in the 1936 or 1938 scenario before the war starts. This way you can shift your HQ organization and your unit deployment in order to match your style and strategy, as well as building a few units “to taste.” Otherwise, you're locked into the starting position on the ground when the bullets start flying, and must make the best of it (these are all historical deployments, and you may start at war).

HOI 3 divisions and brigades – the whole structure, really – is very modular. You can mix and match just about anything.

In early games, brigades are often organised three to a division. This allows you to put as many as four divisions into a typical combat, equaling 12 combat brigades. If you want to switch brigades from one division to another, you can split them out of the command using the “reorganise” button, and put them back in using the “organize” button.

Divisions, brigades and HQs can also be re-named. Brigades are numbered at game start, generally as a way of keeping track of what division they're with. You can re-name them once you switch them into new units. Otherwise, it might start to look really confusing. It's recommended that you maintain as much of the original structure as possible, or else this can become a nightmare.

The number of brigades you should have in each division may partly be dictated by your own preferences, and partly by your own limitations

in terms of the amount of territory you must defend, etc. However, if you expect to have a large number of divisions and brigades in combat along your front, there are some mathematical realities you should consider as you construct your divisions.

Some countries, in later games, will acquire the doctrine tech which allows you to have up to five brigades in a division. It's best to use some of these slots for support brigades – throw an engineer or artillery brigade in there, or both. But if you use all five slots for combat brigades, and you end up with a divisional combat front of five, then you'll only have two divisions (10 combat brigades) in a typical battle, instead of three or four.

If you alternate paired divisions in 4-brigade, 5-brigade groups (nine brigades total), then they will allow you to fit a third large division into the combat front, with the potential of getting 13 or 14 combat brigades into a typical frontage. Likewise, providing one or more support brigade to the two-division set would allow that third large division to fit. So long as the available frontage is 10, your goal should always be to avoid having only 10 combat brigades in there, and using clever organization of divisions to allow you to "shoehorn" extra divisions in there, with extra brigades. You do the math.

In the Supplement to the Strategy Guide (available on the Paradox Forum), we'll discuss what unit types are most effective, and how to use support brigades to increase the potency of your divisions without increasing their combat frontage.

If you have brigades which are just not useful to you (or ships), you may find it more beneficial to disband them and return the manpower used by those units into your manpower pool. These units also consume supplies and (during peacetime) consumer goods, so even obsolete units take up resources which may not be in good supply. However, be very careful as you do this. Upgrading is usually a better option (except for ships), because it turns your obsolete land or air units into well-equipped modern units for an IC cost that is less than building that modern unit from scratch. Even older ships may be upgraded in some ways (AA, ASW, etc.), and may prove more useful on duty than in the scrap heap.

Be careful as you use the "integrate (merge)" and "reorganise" buttons, because if you begin attaching divisions and corps to higher headquarters commands without regard to geography or mission, you may soon find that you've created a confusing mess that looks like spaghetti! A command structure should look ordered, and it should make sense. You shouldn't have units under an HQ's command if they're too distant. These should be organised under a different command. You also shouldn't have any units that have a completely different mission from the main headquarters – that is, units which are designed to move and attack should have a different headquarters from units which are meant to act as defensive reserves or partisan-suppressing garrisons.

HOW MANY HQS?

Keep in mind that every HQ you have soaks up a portion of your officers from your leadership pool. This can imbalance your units, and make it more "expensive" in terms of leadership points which you could otherwise have used to fund research, etc. Don't overdo HQs. Disbanding them can regain these officers for redistribution into your units, which may be handy if your officer levels fall too low.

"Playing as any country in 36 you should probably totally reorganize the army structure. Disbanding excess HQs you can normally get your

officer levels to about 120%. For a properly organised army France needs at most 3-4 Armies."

– Alan Riddell (Peekee), Edinburgh, Scotland

UNIT MANAGEMENT

There are times when you may want to use the priority buttons on the unit interface to prioritize some units for reinforcement and upgrade, and to cause others to become ineligible. Basically, if you're unable to fully fund either reinforcement or upgrade with your available IC (or both), you can exercise control over which units get the benefit of what you have. You may want to set certain units on important parts of the front to priority so they'll be ready when they're needed. You may also want to set units in "backwater" portions of your empire not to upgrade or reinforce.

Always make sure to turn these settings off when the need for them is no longer present. For instance, if you have a unit that's set not to reinforce because their theatre is inactive, but later that becomes an active theatre, you don't want that unit at 2/3 strength because you've been denying them any reinforcements. Likewise, you don't want to deny these units access to the latest technology if you finally have the IC to make it available. Make a mental note to check on this from time to time – a routine unit survey across your whole empire.

ASSIGNING & MANAGING COMMANDERS

The computer should default to "auto-assigning" commanders to your units. However, you can change these assignments at any time (unless the unit is in combat). It may be a good idea to optimize your command structure, so your most talented leaders are leading your most important units. The auto-assign AI should take the leaders' traits into account, but you should make sure the most valuable panzer leaders are in charge of the most valuable armoured units. Sometimes, this is most effectively done by spending a few minutes with your Army Leaders page in the Statistics tab. Order your commanders by rank/grade, and take note of which ones at each level have the highest skill and the best traits. Also take note of whether they're already assigned. Then go through your most important units and make sure they have good commanders – if not, or if you'd prefer to have one of your "stars" there, replace the existing commander with your choice.

You can also promote or demote officers ("demotion" doesn't necessarily mean you're punishing the guy – some commanders were giving temporary assignments, and could be reduced to their permanent grade without it seeming like punishment – Gen. Eisenhower's permanent grade for much of the war was Lieutenant Colonel!). It's important to have enough generals at each level to command your different levels of HQ, because each assignment requires a particular rank.

Sometimes, you will want to promote your most experienced commanders to a higher level, as these are the officers most likely to succeed at a higher level. You may sometimes find they perform badly at higher levels, and you may want to place them back where they were.

Officers have a "historic promotion date," where they traditionally assumed that command level. If you promote a historic officer too quickly, it's possible he may never live up to his historical legend.

"Leaders do not lose skill when promoted or demoted, although their experience is reset, so you are free to adjust ranks to put your generals wherever you want. Remember traits when setting up chains of

command. Trait effects are halved for each level away from divisional command, but leaders' effects add to each other. If you have a leader with the same trait at every level in the chain the combined bonus will be 194.25%. If you want to cut down on supply usage consider stacking logistics wizards, or pile on offensive generals for large attack bonuses."

– David Ballantyne (Darkrenown), Paisley, Scotland

You can "cultivate" highly skilled commanders, so that they become more valuable to you over time, by placing them in command of units which are going into battle. Remember that even corps and army commanders (and group and theatre commanders) receive a portion of the experience from battles taking place within their range of command. Make use of these tactics to improve your generals' skills.

SETTING HQ PRIORITIES

Whether on AI control or not, an HQ only benefits the units under its command if it is within "radio range" to them. Technology can improve this range. It's indicated by a little HQ icon in the upper right of the HQ's unit interface, which should show you a tooltip with its range. The units themselves will indicate through a similar icon whether they're in range or not (green is, brown is not). You should try to keep the HQs within range of their units if you're managing them manually.

A blue dot indicates what portions of the front each Corps HQ or higher has responsibility for. That HQ's provinces will have a bright blue dot, whereas other HQs' dots show as a faded blue.

An HQ under AI control is defined as being on Attack or Defense (two stances for each), which you can set in the HQ Interface. Blitzing is the most aggressive stance, and the HQ will attack anytime it thinks it has a chance. Attack is the next most aggressive. On Defense stance, it will mostly prepare to defend against attacks, but it may attack if it sees good odds. Only on Prepare stance will an HQ never attack, and will only prepare to meet an enemy attack.

When a unit is under AI control you can set its objectives to either defend or attack (according to stance). If you set fewer objectives, you should choose only major targets so as not to confuse the AI. To exercise more fine control on where it will launch its attacks (on offense) you can shift-rightclick to set their axis of advance. This tells them what path to take (in general) to reach their objective.

Whether you're in AI control or manual, you should only set one mission for any one corps. No corps should be split between two missions, such as attacking an objective on the one hand, and defending a position on the other – the AI has enough trouble interpreting your orders as it is. Even under manual control, it is wise to keep the corps together so the HQ doesn't have to decide between staying on one side or the other of a breach.

HQS IN COMBAT

Generally, you will not want to involve your HQs in combat. They are all but worthless, as combat units, plus they're very vulnerable to damage and shattering. Keep them close enough to support your combats, but don't send them in with the divisions they're with.

The HQ should be ready to move after their divisions if they advance, though they should be wary of following into a narrow breakthrough where they might be caught. Radio range will normally reach units that have broken through a province or two into enemy territory.

Best practice is probably to keep them a province away from the fighting, but this is not always necessary. Higher-level HQs, with longer radio ranges, should always be behind the front line by one or more provinces, because there's absolutely no reason to have them close to the fighting.

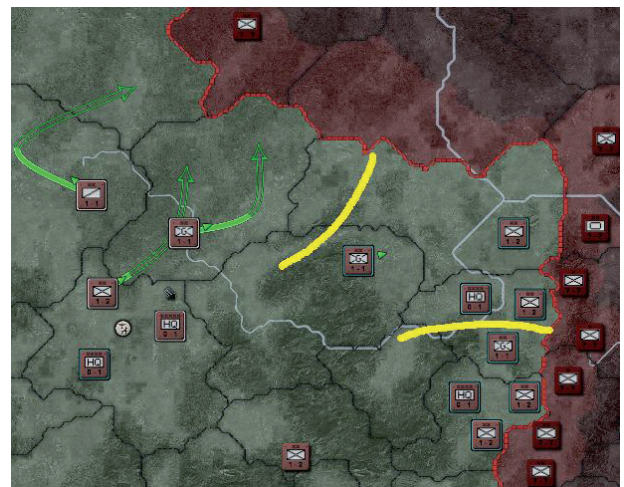
HQs do have the advantage of being fast, which makes them useful. They can move out of the way quickly, if they're threatened. On the other hand, they can also be used to block an enemy move, or to occupy territory. This is a very dangerous tactic, though, and you should only use them this way if you're sure you can protect them in time, or if you have no other choice. HQs shatter very easily.

HQs can be used to pin an enemy unit, but it's very risky. Be ready to pull them back as soon as they start getting close to the point where they would shatter. It may be that you won't have achieved your purpose by then, but that's part of the risk too.

MOVING A CORPS AND ARMY EFFECTIVELY

A well-played game will demonstrate how a corps works together as a unit over the space of two or more provinces, naturally flanking and enveloping the enemy as a part of its fluidic function. Think of a military unit as a balloon. As it presses against the enemy (some hard object), it stops only at the point of contact. The rest of the balloon wraps around the "enemy," partially enveloping it. That's what military units do in the field, and that's what group- and corps-level units should do in HOI 3.

You should regularly check your units' arrival times, to see how close they are to moving forward and reaching their objective. Sometimes, in combat, you'll notice these indicators are not quite correct – a unit which advances in combat may occupy the enemy held province before the indicator says it will, because the combat throws indicators off. Tooltips will show you the destination. If you want to see the ultimate destination (at the end of its movement orders) you can click on the unit. Multiple units can be selected with a select box to see each of their destinations together.



An illustration of how corps are assigned responsibilities (the yellow lines show divisions between HQs), as well as an exaggerated demonstration of how they might move in concert with one another (green arrows), each division covering one approach toward a target. Ultimately, the three divisions would border the target province on three sides, but would attack together.

Try to maintain a relatively coherent front line – not something jagged, which makes it hard to defend. If one unit is getting too far ahead, you might consider slowing it down to let the other units catch up. Sometimes, if the left-behind units are no longer moving forward, you might even consider withdrawing a unit one province if it's too far forward, which exposes it to attack.

Forming a line of units from province to province – a linked defensive line – is called “tying in.”

When moving your units, think ahead. Where do you want your troops in a week? In a month? Make sure your estimates are realistic, but be prepared to adjust if things don't go as planned. Planning ahead is very important for Headquarters, because if they fall behind your advancing troops, they may not get the benefit they need from HQ support.

Combat maps historically would show the boundary of responsibility between one corps and the next, and between one army and the next, etc. HOI 3 does not show this with a line, but you can see the responsibility areas by selecting the HQ and seeing which units pulse with a bright blue border. Using this feature, you can “see” the corps and army boundaries in your mind's eye.

MANAGING UNIT MOVEMENT

Pay attention to the speeds of land, air and naval unit types which might be mixed in with your divisions or groups. The speed (and other attributes also) of your least capable unit will determine the speed (and other factors) for the whole unit. If you need a fleet or land unit to move at high speed, detach any units which will slow it down (and find another home for them – don't just leave detached brigades hanging around).

If you've used a Select Box, however, the units you've selected may have different top speeds. In those cases, your units will each move at their Divisional top speed. Take this into account if you're trying to coordinate the arrival of units. It may be more exact (though more time consuming) to assign each unit a time to arrive in combat.

REGROUPING

You've heard the term “fall back and regroup?” When units become separated in the confusion of combat, they lose their ability to work together effectively. When you get a chance, it's important to attempt to regroup – get your divisions together in the same vicinity with their proper corps, get your corps sequenced properly so one corps doesn't overlap with another, etc. In this way, you restore your ability to perform combined actions as a united corps, and you remain able to assign only one task to the units of one corps.

Alternatively, if your units are too much of a mess to sort out, or if they're all locked in combat and can't regroup, you can re-assign their commands so that corps trade divisions with each other until all a corps' newly assigned units are together.

DISPERSED BATTLEFIELDS

If you've got an open frontier, without a solid front line, movements are more fluid. Sometimes, intercepting land units with other land units isn't much different from making a “deflection shot” in air combat. You must make an educated guess of where the enemy unit is heading, and how long it will take him to get there, then plot your course to arrive where you think he's going so you'll be in his way once he gets there.

USING TRANSPORT SHIPS

Some areas just have such low infrastructure, or such adverse terrain, that it's easier and more time effective to keep a transport nearby and move them by ship. It may seem like it would take more time to do the whole loading process, and then moving by sea, but if you test it you'll often find it takes much longer to move overland through certain provinces. This process is complicated by the need for a naval base to load your units onto a transport. Your units will have to get to the naval base, and will need to move along the coast to the next naval base, unless you're moving into enemy territory.

“Through careful use of the AI-assist feature regarding HQs you can achieve a great degree of control while letting the computer do most of the actual work for you. Take the example of Germany in 1936. The Bitburg HQ has responsibility for the defense of the western half of Germany. By automating + giving objectives to HQs below the theatre level (instead of at theatre level) you can achieve force ratio and set up plans for individual (but unequal) forces while still enjoying all the bonuses that a full corps-army-army group-theater command chain gives. In this example, you could have an army of 25 divisions guarding the French border, a smaller army of 12 divisions guarding the Dutch border, a small corps watching Belgium/Luxembourg, and a corps on Denmark. The sub-HQs can also have air and naval assets assigned to them. A good example would be fighter support for the French border army and CAS and naval forces for the corps assigned to Denmark. In this way you can make sure that forces are not simply divided evenly along an entire border, but that forces are set as you would like, and appropriately to the task YOU feel that they face.”

– Jeff Barkhauer Sr., (Barkhauer), Norwalk, Connecticut

USING MAPMODES, OUTLINER AND STATISTICS PAGES

In the Supplement to the Strategy Guide I will have a detailed appendix on how to use the Mapmodes, Outliner and Statistics pages to get a good grasp on what's going on in your game, and to prevent confusion. These tools can help you manage all your resources – I just don't have room here to go into it.



“Those who do not know the conditions of mountains and forests, hazardous defiles, marshes and swamps, cannot conduct the march of an army.”

– Sun Tzu, The Art of War

USING TERRAIN PROPERLY

Always look to “defensible” terrain. This may normally be a tactical consideration, but it can work as well at a strategic level by choosing the right provinces. Finding defensible positions is more complicated than just stringing units together into an uninterrupted front line. Rivers and forests, and especially mountain ranges, may provide the kind of defensible terrain you need to prevent a breakthrough. But also have an eye toward “exposure” of provinces along your defense line, which is explained more in a coming chapter.

Terrain can be useful for more than just combat in a province. Terrain which slows movement can be used as a buffer against attack, and special terrain like large lakes can entirely prevent attack from one direction. Lakes also block supply, which must go around.

Terrain drives strategy in certain regions. For instance, the steppes and the swamps in the Ukraine may end up having very different types of combat between themselves, but certainly both will be very different from combat in the mountains of Norway, or the jungles of the Netherlands East Indies. For Norway’s part, its geography displays yet another facet of this, by highlighting how strategic considerations are constrained by the narrow width of the country, compared with the Ukraine’s wide open fronts.

Use infantry in areas where tanks have a disadvantage, such as swamps. Always check the terrain you’re operating on. Don’t just rush in with your tanks – make sure you’re not putting them in a bad situation.

MINDING THE WEATHER

Author’s Note: I expected there might be more change in the way weather operates between when the Manual was completed and now, but it’s all working pretty much the way we expected at that time. I don’t have a lot to add to how the weather works. But here are some pointers as to how to work in different weather conditions...

Pay attention to what weather systems are coming into your area, especially during winter, because these could impact your operations of aircraft or land offensives. Remember, it could also negatively impact your enemy’s operations.

Bombing will be more difficult in windy conditions, or if there is a lot of cloud cover. Rain will make bombing very ineffective. Obviously, combine the worst of these conditions with nighttime modifiers, and your planes will be essentially useless, even without stacking penalties.

Mud will slow units down considerably. Periodically (weekly or biweekly) spot check a variety of provinces to find out whether mud exists in any great quantities. If you see a province with mud, check other nearby provinces. It’s like with termites – if you see one, there’s probably more. If there’s a lot of mud, it can seriously put a damper (no pun intended) on your mobility. Otherwise, take note of where it is and avoid it, checking every few hours to make sure more mud hasn’t come into being that could block your movement.



DEFENSIVE PREPARATIONS

“The art of war teaches us to rely not on the likelihood of the enemy’s not coming, but on our own readiness to receive him; not on the chance of his not attacking, but rather on the fact that we have made our position unassailable. ... Hence that general is skillful in attack whose opponent does not know what to defend; and he is skillful in defense whose opponent does not know what to attack.”

– Sun Tzu, The Art of War

STATIC DEFENSES

Modern military doctrine often suggests that static defenses tie you down to that spot. Partly this is because of the lesson we now know about how the Maginot Line was bypassed and never attacked by the Germans. Obviously, if the enemy has tanks moving to either side of you, your fort is not going to keep you from being encircled and cut off. However, properly constructed, sited and used, a fort can become part of your “defensive terrain” – strategies which treat forts as terrain will be much more successful than strategies which treat forts as a standalone wall of defenses.

Enemy divisions will hesitate to attack a fort, even if it’s just a small one, so having something there is better than nothing, on defense. Many people dislike static defenses, and I’m one of them. But if you can spare the IC, it’s never a bad idea to have defensive lines somewhere, just in case you ever need them.

Coastal fortresses may be especially valuable where you have naval bases, or in other areas where it’s the only place an enemy can logically land. For instance, on an island, your opponent is going to have to gather expensive troop transports in order to transport enough strength to overcome your island defenders in the first place. Add a coastal fort to the mix, and there’s a much better chance the enemy will be defeated without dislodging you.

Coastal forts do not protect against attacks from the land, and land forts do not protect against attacks from the sea (they’re presumed to be located some distance from the ocean, so less able to protect against amphibious assaults). To fully protect a coastal province, you’ll need both types of fort. Often, it’s wisest to pick one or the other, and to guard against someone taking advantage of your vulnerability.

GUARDING ASSETS

Careful not to leave important assets unguarded. What might important assets be? Capitals, obviously. Any provinces with Victory Points, IC

(factories), or those with resources your country needs. Forts. Ports (naval bases). There are many others, as well, some of which may be important to some countries, but not to others.

Guarding an asset may mean keeping strong defensive forces there. Or it may mean a brigade, or even an HQ unit, if that’s all you have. Guarding could instead mean attacking an enemy in order to “pin” it before it can attack what (or who) you’re protecting. It may also mean airstrikes on an enemy unit as it advances.

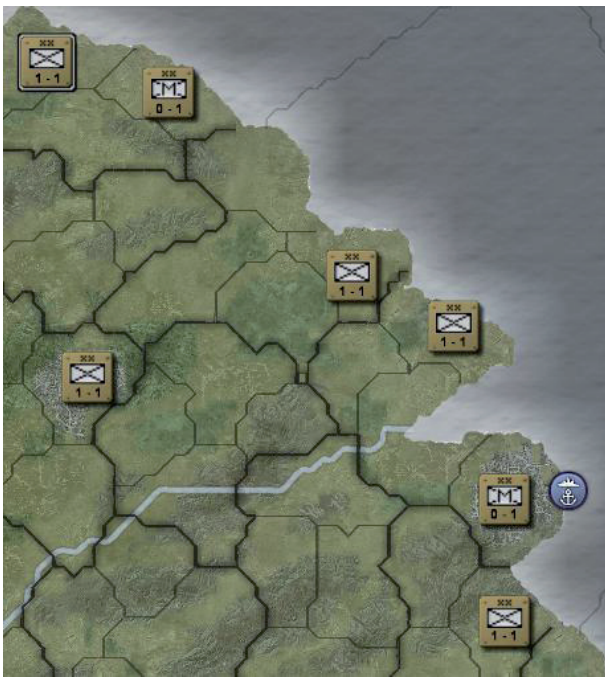
Expect the unexpected, especially in Multiplayer games where you have a human opponent who not only is trying to outthink you, but who also may know you and how you typically think!

YOUR FRONTIER

Examine your front lines carefully – make sure there are no breaks or weak points in the line that could be exploited by the enemy. Sometimes, provinces will have very brief borders with another province that aren’t immediately obvious. You might be very surprised, if you’re not watching, when an enemy unit slips past your flank and threatens your supply lines!

You don’t necessarily have to keep an uninterrupted line of units on the border, because each unit has a potential “zone of control” (to borrow a term from old paper & dice wargames) reaching one province in every direction. However, this zone is far more limited than their equivalents in the old wargames because the zone of control option can only extend in one direction at any one time. Once you’ve committed to block one province, the division can’t turn around and block or attack another. This could be mitigated by spacing “_xx _ xx _” or by having rapid reaction reserves with the speed to respond to emergencies. Keep in mind that any setup without an uninterrupted line of units is vulnerable to being pinned, which would allow the enemy to slip another attack between your units.

Take special note of the section on “exposure,” in the Key Military Concepts chapter. Basically, a province which borders three or four



The deployment shown above should work to defend a coastline if you're short on divisions. You could split out detached brigades if you wanted, and place one in every coastal province, but that dilutes your strength even more – this is better. The gaps in the line are covered by the adjacent units on either side, though this allows the enemy to actually land first, rather than being kept at sea where the invasion can be intercepted by your navy. This pattern could be used on a land border too, but would be vulnerable to pinning, which would allow the enemy to slip through your holes. Keep in mind that there's only one place shown above where a wise opponent would invade, and that's the port. Anyplace else, he's going to be stuck trying to place a level 1 naval base for supply while you're busy pounding his invasion. Is this an excuse to leave the coastline completely undefended and concentrate on defending the city? That depends how quickly a strong reserve force can get to a coastal invasion spot to oppose it.

provinces is very exposed, because it's possible to attack it from multiple directions, adding to both, the combat front, and the negative defensive modifiers. Check your line for locations like this and make sure you have a defensive plan (stronger units?) for these sites.

COASTLINES

There are no designated "beaches" in HOI 3, so this might seem to indicate you can be invaded anywhere, which would greatly complicate your job of defending long coastlines. Some locations, obviously, will be bad choices – Gallipoli, in World War I, was famously miscast as a landing site. No, you no longer have a guarantee that some provinces cannot be invaded. But there are certain rules which must be followed by an invader, and these rules can guide your defensive dispositions along a coastline.

The enemy can really only supply a small landing force by placing a "temporary" port there – a one-point pre-prepared naval base which they can place once the invasion has succeeded in taking the province. Otherwise, they will need to invade at or near a naval base, which they would need to supply a larger invasion once it's captured. Knowing this,

you will also know how to best position your defenses.

If you're defending a coastline, and you don't have enough units to cover every coastal province, try covering every 3rd province, focusing on naval bases first. Though this is a very thin line, it allows this net of units to be within one province of wherever someone might invade. Once every other province improves this defensive network. Any invasion coming ashore may be engaged by any unit in an adjacent province to hold it, and then other units may come to its assistance.

OCCUPIED TERRITORY

Suppression of rebels is an art. You need to space out your units which have a suppression value, and keep an eye on the Revolt risk Mapmode to see where you may need to station units, or send them to ward off a spike in rebel activity. If a rebellion actually does break out, respond quickly, because these rebels aren't kidding.

The presence of an actual rebellion should draw response from all nearby units, because the reality of one rebellion outweighs the possibility of others. As soon as it's defeated, move your units back to their stations so they can continue suppression efforts.

Nationalism is always going to be present in an occupied province unless it's a core for you. You will always have to worry about the possibility of partisan uprisings, though you can counter this or increase this risk according to your occupation policies. Keeping some forces to add suppression and to be ready to defeat partisans is wise. The higher the revolt risk, the more forces you should ideally hold back.

A brigade of Military Police actually has the best chance of preventing a revolt (i.e. suppression). However, if/when the revolt breaks out, it's an individual detached brigade without much combat power, and so it's wise to team it up with another brigade.

Garrisons have limited suppression power, and they can be used instead of military police, or in concert with them (say, one of each?).

Infantry and cavalry both have some limited suppression capability, plus they are more effective in combat. If you can spare a limited amount of either for garrison duty (cavalry is best, as it's faster), place one division centrally so that it can respond quickly to the site of a rebellion. It doesn't need to be adjacent, just near enough to come running.

SURVIVING BATTLEFIELD DEFEAT

In the chapter entitled Tactics for Success, we will discuss how to come back from a major battlefield defeat. Don't panic! Don't give up. There are ways to deal with failure, and even to come back and win the game.



KEY MILITARY CONCEPTS

“The main tasks of motorised supporting infantry are to follow up at speed behind the tank attacks, and exploit and complete their successes without delay. ... Tanks are unable by themselves to meet all the combat tasks which come their way; the other arms will be needed as well, for example to deal with difficult terrain, artificial obstacles, or anti-tank weapons sited in ‘tank-prohibited’ ground. In this requirement the tanks differ in no respect from the other arms, and inter-arm co-operation is therefore a matter of fundamental importance.”

– Maj. Gen. Heinz Guderian, in *Achtung-Panzer!*, published in 1937.

CONCENTRATION OF FORCE

It's important not to get your forces too separated. If the enemy is advancing in the south, it may be necessary to pull units in the north back so that they don't become dangerously exposed. As they turn your “strategic flank,” as it were, units which were expected only to have to guard one direction will increasingly have to watch a second direction also. To prevent opening gaps in your line, pulling back may be necessary as you “turn your flank” to prevent the enemy getting past.

If you have your units spread out all over, it's often best to try to pool them and gain a “united front.” Together, they may be able to win battles and accomplish goals they could not if they were operating entirely on their own.

Since concentration of force is a desired situation, for attacker and defender alike, consider the effect upon an enemy as it retreats toward its homeland – as the empire shrinks, the front narrows, and their “lines of communication” shorten, both of which are desirable for defensive moves. They may even get to fall back upon prepared fortifications. Conquering an enemy often becomes harder as you near their capital, for a great many reasons. On the other hand, every bit of territory you capture takes away potential manpower and IC, along with other resources.

ECONOMY OF FORCE

A corollary to the concentration of force is an economy of force, because in the effort to pool all necessary resources, you'll often have to strip them from other areas.

The concept of “economy of force” is basically making the best use you can with the forces at your disposal. Ideally, you want to draw all the forces you can possibly spare into your main operation, or into the support

of your offensive or defensive strategy. This means not leaving any units unemployed or without a job to do. If you have units sitting on defense on a frontier that is not active, and is not likely to be active, this is a waste of their power. Of course, this is difficult to know with certainty – therefore the best “economy of force” is an estimate, and failures in correctly estimating this can result in disaster.

FORCE PROJECTION

The ability to make your military presence felt at a location away from your borders. The Battle of Britain, the German convoy raiders, Pearl Harbour, the Doolittle Raid and carrier operations in general are all examples of this.

Colonial powers, especially, must have the ability to project power in order to protect their colonies. Conquering powers have this same need, if they're conquering abroad.

Technically, raiders like **KMS Graf Spee** or **Bismarck** are not good examples of force projection, because they cannot maintain their presence in the face of enemy force projection. Raiders can't protect, they can only predate, harass and strangle, then run. Nevertheless, they do represent a temporary projection of power.

COMBINED ARMS

The concept of “combined arms” means having a mixture of mutually-supporting types of units. For instance, on the battlefield infantry likes to have tanks because of the extra firepower they provide, and it's even nice to travel behind a tank so you can use it like a moving wall. The tanks like having infantry nearby because if an enemy soldier is hiding nearby with an anti-tank rifle, the infantry can respond more quickly and effectively than the limited anti-personnel weapons on a tank. Either infantry or



With defensive depth, a one-province breakthrough just faces another wall.

armour is more vulnerable, and less versatile on the whole, without the other present to contribute to what each does best.

HOI 3 represents this combined arms factor as a combat modifier, given to units which have a mixture of approximately 1/3 of one type of unit or the other (i.e. hard or soft). This is represented as a "softness" value – anything between 66 and 33 percent is considered to have combined arms.

The combined arms bonus is not a small factor – it's one of the most substantial positive modifiers for combat. If you can bring these diverse units into combat, it will be worth it. Either build your units with this in mind, assign them to HQs in sets, or have them travel together so they go into combat together. Keep in mind different travel speeds may make this difficult for HQs or yourself to manage.

DEFENSE IN DEPTH

There's no great advantage to piling all of your units up along the border, especially when you consider the limitations imposed by stacking penalties and combat frontage. If you have room for four divisions along the combat front, and might like to have another couple of divisions as reserves, any additional divisions are just in the way.

Partly, this is a conceptual shift from HOI 2, where provinces were bigger, and could contain more units effectively. In HOI 2, you would lose if you didn't stack as much power as you could into the attacking province. By contrast, in HOI 3, it's important to make use of the space and freedom you're given – use the full depth of territory built into the system.



The Czech defensive perimeter defending the Sudetenland from Germany. Cheb is the most exposed province, because it can be attacked from 4 directions! Most is next most. Chomutov is in good shape, because it can only be attacked from one direction unless one of its neighboring provinces falls.

Sometimes it's useful to only have two or three divisions on the front line. Rather than having your reserves actually in the same province, ready to move forward if and when one of the front line units shatters, you could have your reserves positioned one province back from the front line. This way, any units which are losing may pull back after having sapped the enemy strength. By falling back upon the reserve positions, it defeats the momentum the enemy has built up. It also prevents encirclement, and preserves your units to fight another day.

The enemy is trying to break through your lines. If you have multiple lines to break through, the enemy's job is going to be much harder. It becomes a constant battle of attrition for the enemy, and unless he has really committed sufficient forces to keep going through all of your defensive lines, his breakthrough attempt will stall. You have the added advantage that unless he's scouting with aircraft or radar (sigint), he may not know how many defensive lines you have.

A "poor man's" defensive depth is like what I described earlier – rather than having units positioned one behind the other, pull back your troops before they're too badly damaged. This is not going to work for long, though, because eventually these units will be ground to dust and bypassed.

EXPOSURE

A "salient" is a "bulge" which extends out from the front line (hence, the Battle of the Bulge). It often exists because of unevenly advancing armies, or because of a recent offensive or counteroffensive. Any salient is "exposed" because it can be attacked from more than just one direction.

Defenders who are in a "spur" (a small salient, or minor projection from the front line) are exposed and vulnerable because they can be attacked from three or four provinces instead of just one or two.

Spurs and salients exist naturally along many country borders, too, which means they will be the places attacked when an enemy comes to invade.

OBJECTIVES

War and battle objectives are more than just the objectives you set for your HQs, although those certainly qualify. If you do not fully identify short-term and long-term objectives in your war – defensive or offensive

– then you will be spinning your wheels in much of what you do.

Objectives are like goals, except that they are generally territorial. You set an objective to reach – to defend or capture – and you work to meet that goal. Historically, the USA's Pacific War was a series of objectives – first, stop the enemy advance, then capture the Solomon Islands, then the Philippines (with short-term waypoints along the way), then Iwo Jima, then Okinawa, etc. See the Strategic Thinking chapter for more on this.

MUTUAL SUPPORT

Normally, a province will be adjacent to more than one province on your side of the border. The more flanks you can open up (i.e. the more provinces you can attack from), the better your combat modifiers will be. So units in adjacent provinces can and should support each other in attacks unless there's another mission that's more important for the neighboring units.

When you are attacking a province that has multiple exposures, you have the opportunity to increase the combat modifiers yet further.

The expansion in scope of the HOI 3 map opens new opportunities for mutual support. If you examine the graphic provided in the next section, you will notice an attack going forward, but the units in adjacent provinces are supporting the attack not by joining in the same attack, but by providing mutual support in the form of "pinning" or "fixing" the enemy units in neighboring provinces which otherwise could interfere with the first stack's attack. Therefore, they are offering mutual support without even attacking the same province.

Sometimes (in rare circumstances) it's worth using "non-combatant" HQs to engage a mostly surrounded unit from a new direction, just so you open up a wider combat front and allow more units to engage. The encirclement penalties of being attacked from a new direction, even if it's by a toothless unit, can win the battle more quickly.

FEINTS & PROBES

Probing is the "reconnaissance by fire" mentioned earlier (Intelligence chapter). Test the enemy with a brief skirmish, or "probe," then back off if the odds are not favorable, or if you judge it is not the right time to press that attack. Sometimes, if you find the enemy's defenses are weak, you will want to "develop" your probe into a real assault and thrust.

There is also the concept of a "feint" – a move to confuse or mislead the enemy, and throw them off balance so that the primary attack can be more successful. You make the enemy think your main attack is coming in one place, and wait for him to start shifting his defenses in that direction. Then you throw the rest of your offensive into gear, with the main blow hitting a place which you're hoping the enemy just weakened in order to protect the place where you attacked first! Thankfully, HOI 3 is flexible enough to do this, with its large number of provinces per battlefield front.

A feint must contain sufficient strength to be credible – so that the enemy will really think it is the main attack.

A form of reverse psychology follows from the concept of the feint. In June of 1944, the Germans had been so convinced that the real attack would come upon the beaches of Calais that they believed the invasion at Normandy must be a feint. Therefore, they were slow to react. If you set up an expectation that you will launch feints prior to the real attack, then at some later time you may actually take advantage of their assumption that your first attack is just a feint.

PINNING (FIXING) THE ENEMY

When you launch an attack at one point along the front, you can expect that the enemy will attempt to hit you along your flanks from adjacent provinces. The more exposed your attack is (i.e. the more successful your thrust is in penetrating the enemy lines), the more vulnerable your main thrust will be to being flanked.



This is why you should always attempt to "pin" or "fix" the flanks of your main thrust by attacking, which has the effect of preventing that unit from moving in another direction. In HOI 3, once you declare your intentions, the enemy may react as quickly as one hour later, so your opportunity to pin the enemy comes at the same time as the main attack, or else they may already come into combat with your main thrust.

Sometimes, this may be your intention. It has the result of sacrificing your main thrust by allowing it to be flanked, but there is a certain logic to allowing the enemy to attack and then attacking **his** flank. If you truly wanted to develop your initial attack into a breakthrough attempt, you would never want to do this.

The pinning attack does not have to be strong, nor even intended to defeat the enemy. All you're trying to do is keep him from moving for a period of time. Once pinning has achieved its purpose, you can let go.

SUSTAINED PRESSURE

The concept of sustained pressure – continuing an attack, and not letting up – has the advantage of not allowing the enemy to recover properly from previous attack. If a unit is allowed to "break contact" and move to an area where it's not in combat, then it has the opportunity to repair its losses, especially its organisation. By continuing to attack, perhaps by using your own units which have not been also exhausted by combat (assuming you have enough to spare), you will eventually wear the enemy down by attrition.

PENETRATION & ENVELOPMENT

This was dealt with some in the section on defense in depth, and will be approached in more detail in the Breakthrough chapter, but "penetration" is where your attack – your "spearhead" – pierces the enemy's defensive lines, and you're allowed to push your thrust through the "breach" in the enemy lines.

This is the single most effective means of permanently destroying enemy combat force, because it allows you to “envelop” and encircle the enemy units. Hopefully, they will be unable to escape your encirclement, and will be forced to surrender, permanently removing them from the enemy order of battle, and decreasing the number of enemy divisions you’ll have to face in the future.

The most effective form of envelopment is the “double envelopment” or “pincer movement,” where you successfully penetrate the enemy lines at two nearby points (but not too nearby, as that lessens the number of units you can surround) in an effort to completely encircle them. The dual nature of this attack lessens the amount of time you would need to invest in order to complete your encirclement, which is meaningful because the more time the enemy has to react to your move, the less likely you’ll succeed in cutting them off before they either halt your thrust or escape the pocket. The pincer has the advantage of allowing a successful envelopment even if one thrust is stopped.

TURNING FLANKS

There’s a reason the “front” is called a front. Your goal is to have to face, and defend, in only one direction. Otherwise, you run the risk of being “flanked” – having the enemy come at you from a side where your defenses are not really prepared to repel an attack.

When enemy action captures a province to one side or the other of a unit’s position, that unit is becoming more exposed, and needs to reassess its defensive position. This may be as simple as adding more defensive resources in the direction which has become exposed – a shifting, or “turning” of the front.

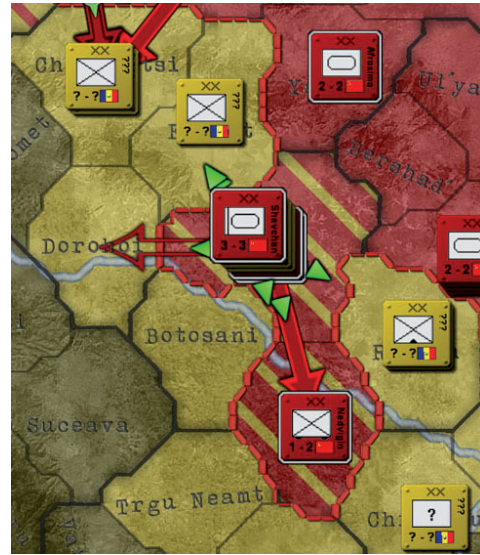
STRATEGIC WITHDRAWAL

In more extreme situations, where a unit’s flank has been turned and its increased exposure puts it at risk of being encircled, the unit should consider making a strategic withdrawal into a position where it is less exposed. Sometimes this means surrendering territory, but that is often preferable to surrendering the unit itself!

Sometimes, if the front line is turned over a larger geographical area, a strategic withdrawal of units from exposed provinces will need to be pulled back in order to shorten the line. The increased scope of HOI 3’s province map allows things such as this to be represented either in single provinces, or even in whole regions which can themselves become exposed.

Also, if you’re fighting a losing battle, it is permissible to pull back and “regroup.” This depends on your strategic situation, of course. If you’re playing Denmark, there’s not a lot of room to fall back to. But strategic withdrawals are an important strategy which may preserve your units to fight another day, perhaps on more favorable terrain or in a more preferable combat situation.

The idea of strategic withdrawal is to trade land for strategic advantage, but can also be used to gain time. Sometimes, time is required to prepare a new defensive line (if, for instance, the previous line has been breached). Constructing a new defensive line does require some time – time to get the units in position, as well as to allow them to dig in. By making a strategic withdrawal to a new defensive line further from the old front, these units not only maintain “separation” from the enemy, so that they are not under sustained combat pressure, but they also fall back upon the new line and join it to add to its strength.



Here, the Soviets have turned the flank of the division to the north, and he should be considering a strategic withdrawal. It may already be too late for the mountain division to the south, as he’s already lost two facing provinces and has been entirely outflanked and undermined. His best action would be to fall back to the south. (Thanks to Singleton Mosby for use of his image!)

AMBUSH

You can also draw the enemy into exposed positions, which you can then take advantage of. One tactic would be to withdraw from a position, which might invite the enemy to advance. Then you could hit his unprepared advance with a flanking attack, hoping to encircle him or at least defeat him using his uncertain position (he will have no entrenchment, plus you’ve increased the number of flanks you can hit, so he may have envelopment penalties).

EXPLOITATION

Once you’ve breached the enemy lines, you’ve completed the first part of your project, which was difficult enough in itself. But now begins the process of “exploitation” – making use of your position behind the lines to gain maximum effect.

Some of the things that you may be able to do include capturing enemy supplies or supply depots (you might check supply mapmode, and see if anything is visible), cutting off enemy units from supply, and perhaps even raiding enemy airfields!

Depending on the degree to which the enemy has defense in depth or a strategic reserve, your chances to exploit may be limited, or could be great. It’s important to make as much use of your time as you can. See the Breakthrough chapter for more advice on how to handle such situations, and when to bring the “free run” to an end and create a new defensive line.

CHOKE POINTS

There are certain points where naval and maritime traffic has no choice but to funnel through a small area. These areas are primary targets for

offensive and defensive naval operations.

The Suez and Panama Canals are obvious examples of choke points. All other “straits” in the game qualify as well. However, not every choke point must be a designated strait. Anyplace where all traffic must squeeze into a single seazone en route to its destination qualifies as a choke point. There are many of these in the South Pacific, as it meets with the Indian Ocean.



The Gulf of Aden is where many British convoys emerge from the Red Sea, coming from Suez, and scatter to the distant British colonial possessions, or return to or from the ports of many trading partners.

“Certain straits between seas/oceans can be closed by the controller of an adjoining province. If you anticipate that you will need ships in a sea which will be closed to you once war begins then you can move a fleet there before war breaks out, but remember you may never get them back out. You have to base them somewhere within the sea where they can be supplied, but you are allowed to use the naval bases

of your faction members, and they will even kindly provide the supplies your fleet will need. If the UK controls Gibraltar then they will close the Straits of Gibraltar to all enemy ships once the UK is at war. The UK also controls the Suez Canal at the start of the war and will close that, so Axis shipping will not be able to enter or leave the Mediterranean. If you are playing as Germany and anticipate that you might want to send units to North Africa to help the Italians, then rebase a small fleet of transport ships with escorts to an Italian naval base, before war breaks out. Venezia would be a fairly safe choice where your ships are unlikely to be sunk by Allied port strikes. You can then transport your troops across the Mediterranean when you need to, without relying on the Italians. To minimise the danger of your fleet being sunk with the troops on board, first move them to a naval base such as Tirane in Albania (if you control it) or Taranto in Italy. Then make a dash across the Mediterranean to Benghazi in Libya at night. Your chances of being detected by Allied fleets are much lower in the dark. Remember to use the Rebase mission for your fleet, otherwise it will drop off the troops, then return across the Mediterranean during the day.”

– Mark Potter (potski), Durham, UK

DECISIVE VICTORY

It's always best to eliminate your enemy, and not just push him back. If you push him back without destroying him, you get to fight him again once he's recovered, plus whoever else he brings in to support him.

Shattering units, or causing them to surrender, brings you closer to a decisive victory, because it takes the enemy's warmaking power out of the field of battle where it needs to be.

THE DUNKIRK EVACUATION

For many decades, the British people considered the Dunkirk Evacuation to be one of their most embarrassing national defeats. And yet, the perspective of time allows us to realize that the survival of the Royal Army and much of the French Army, and their deliverance from what seemed certain destruction, was really a victory which became one of the great turning points of the war!

For nine days, beginning on the 26th of May, 1940, every available ship, boat or watercraft available on the southern coast of Britain was detailed to help rescue the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk. They carried away 338,000 troops from the beaches, a third of which were French. Seven hundred ships and smaller vessels participated in the evacuation, and 9 destroyers and 9 smaller craft were lost to air attack, submarines, E-boats (like PT boats) and artillery shells. It's often considered a miracle that even the covering force was allowed to escape by the Germans, whose over-centralized reliance on a micromanaging dictator and Luftwaffe chief forestalled an expected armoured assault which would have made short work of the BEF defenders. A later evacuation from St. Malo and Cherbourg prevented the capture of another 215,000 soldiers.

Application: Dunkirk was an amphibious strategic withdrawal. In order to make an evacuation, your troops must gather at a port, and you must bring transports in to embark them. It's wise to think in advance whether you might need to make an evacuation, because once you decide, there may be some planning and time involved in making preparations. Ensure that you have enough transport capacity to carry away the units you're looking to evacuate, and plan time to make multiple trips if you must. Paratroopers can embark on air transports. The problem of defense is an interesting one. You will need to designate one division to attack in each direction against your perimeter (if the enemy is pressing you), or else the other units may not be able to leave. Hopefully, you can stop your combat and immediately board whatever transports are there (I haven't actually tested this – I think it should work) in order to save the last remaining units.



A British fisherman helps British and French soldiers onto his boat while watching a soldier swim toward the boat and a bomb exploding nearby.



“The principle of the Objective - the true objective being that point at which the enemy may be most decisively defeated; generally this point is to be found along the line of least resistance. The principle of Mass - that is, concentration of strength and effort at the decisive point. The principle of the Offensive; the principles of Security, Surprise and Movement (i.e. rapidity).”

– Maj. Gen. J.F.C. Fuller’s “Six Principles of Warfare” (Fuller was the architect of the first mechanised offensive in history, at Cambrai, 1917)

You may have all the strength you could want, or all the money, and all that combined won’t matter if your warmaking is not effective.

THE RIGHT CONDITIONS

In order to effectively attack, you need to ensure the conditions are right for your success. If you have reason to fear an enemy counterattack, either on the same front, or elsewhere, you must ensure that your positions are secure. You must have a proper objective – a realistic one, against which you feel you can prevail.

Probes should be able to tell you if you’ve correctly assessed it as an assailable target, but such tests may simultaneously betray your purpose.

An alternative to probing is to hold a highly mobile reserve back, and attack at various points along the front, trying to find the softest point. This is similar to what B.H. Liddel Hart describes as a disruption strategy, which in his theory will develop an “expanding torrent” of confusion and uncertainty throughout the enemy defensive lines. There is a chance that might work against either, AI or multiplayer opponents. But the twist I would then recommend would be to throw your mobile reserve against that weakest point, and try to develop it into a breakthrough.

It’s always preferable to have at least a small reserve force ready, in case your offensive fails. If you’ve exhausted your front line troops in an unsuccessful attack, that’s when the enemy would be best advised to employ his own reserve in a counteroffensive, which you will then need to deal with. If you don’t have a reserve, the enemy may blow through your weakened line and into your rear area.

There’s no reason why every unit on the line, or even any units along a stretch of the line, must be used to attack. They may be best used just sitting there, adding to their entrenchment values and keeping the enemy from having any useful places to attack.

THE RIGHT DIVISIONS

If you have a large stack of land units, don’t send them all in at once. They’ll get in each others’ way, causing increased stacking penalties, and won’t be able to fit along the combat front anyway. The total number of units involved on each side is **not** as important as who has the stronger units and which of them are able to reach the combat front. Any side with stacks of divisions is only using a portion of them to attack or defend. The rest are locked out and only contribute to the stacking penalty.

It’s in your interest to do what you can to make sure the **right** units are on the combat front. Send in your best four or five divisions. Ensure at least some of them have a combined arms bonus, if you’re able. Hopefully this will fill your line, plus allow one unit to remain in reserve so that it can move forward if there’s a combat event that widens the front.

Choose who you want to have on the combat frontage by sending in just your strongest divisions first (with attention to combined arms, though). Then, send in additional units an hour or so later – enough to take advantage of opportunities to fill extra width during combat events, but not enough that you’ll handicap your attack with stacking penalties.

If divisions get tired and their organisation dips too low, you can send more units from your “ready reserve” to enter combat and take the place of units you decide to withdraw and move back to rest. This is called combat “rotation.”

The stacking penalty means that there is incentive not to use huge, heavy divisions. Even if it’s often useful to have a good mixture of combat and non-combat units in a large division, and you’ll get a very strong combat effectiveness from it, the combined number of brigades on the line – three or four divisions’ worth – will increase the stacking penalty, which may reduce your overall effectiveness.

THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF FORCE

Use overwhelming force where you can. Sometimes, you can beat an enemy division or corps with even odds, but it's not likely and will take a long time in any case. Increasing your odds to double, triple, or even more will not only make winning more certain, but will make victory come more quickly, which allows these units to advance and outflank other units, develop into breakthroughs, etc. Rapid combat, and rapid advancement, are key to the sorts of warfare used in World War II. This is more difficult to do because of the stacking penalty.

It's worth remembering, on the other hand, that it may not always be in your interests to place all of your strong combat units in the front line when combat first begins. You might need that "second wind" provided by a strong combat unit moving to the front later, either when the enemy is tired and you need to renew your offensive, or when the enemy is threatening to win the engagement, and you need a strong reserve.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NIGHT AND DAY

Nighttime penalties to attack are pretty serious, and it might be desired that the initial blow be delivered during the daytime. On the other hand, you may decide that since HOI 3 battles last for a while, and won't generally be decided during one 12 or 24-hour period, it's not so important for land battles as nighttime conditions are for aerial combat.

Attacking at night gets turned on its head once you've achieved the night fighting technology. Then, it becomes your advantage to attack at night, when the enemy has penalties, and you have less.

For these reasons, it's important to keep in mind that all time in the game is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), otherwise known as "Zulu." This means don't freak out when you observe a battle in the South Pacific which says it's occurring at night, and you look at the clock and see "1100" – that's because the game clock is not showing local time. You must always keep this in the back of your mind, to avoid being surprised, and to use this knowledge to plan your attacks.

TIMING ATTACKS

There may be times when the front is static – nothing is going on. If this is the case, you may use the quiet to carefully plan an attack.

Use the time clocks on the Orders Interface to plan attacks. This is normally not necessary for land battles, because instead of having to travel forward to the front before attacking, these units enter combat immediately. There are times when it may be useful. It may be more necessary to sequence Air Missions, especially, because of the difference between day/night modifiers, and stacking effects.

EFFECTIVE COMBAT ODDS

Evaluate as best you can whether you're going to be facing soft or hard targets in the province where you're attacking. You can optimize your attacking units according to this, adding up the highest totals against that type of target.

The more your own divisions' proper hard/soft attack value (modified by effectiveness modifiers) outnumber the enemy units' defensiveness, the more quickly you will inflict damage upon the enemy. Make sure you have good toughness in your attacking units, or else you may also see heavy casualties on your own side. This is why some units are best suited to attacking, and others should be kept on defense.

It's important to have your best commanders at each level, with the

proper specialties, lined up with units that most need their skills. Good leaders at all levels, combining their traits, can really rack up the combat modifiers in your favor.

ENSURING SUPPLY

Infrastructure suffers some as you engage in combat, so moving quickly after major combat is also limited by supply lines, as your rate of resupply is either going to be limited by the damaged infrastructure, or you will need to wait until the infrastructure recovers.

Remember that units which are out of supply cannot claim territory, and they're effectively "in trouble" because of a lot of other limitations. Ensuring the enemy doesn't put you out of supply is a basic component of effective attacks.

READING THE BATTLEFIELD

How to read a battlefield to understand what's likely to happen and who is in a good or bad situation. Tooltips for each province's units can be helpful. Sometimes you'll need to click on the unit interfaces, or on the battle interface, to get a clearer picture of what's going on. You can waste time on this too – balance the amount of time you spend on specifics, as opposed to using the tooltips.

In surveying a battlefield, you need to locate places – preferably just a few, if you're aiming for a breakthrough – where the balance favors you. Once you've identified the spot, move your divisions into position and then take advantage of that soft spot.

SOVIET WINTER OFFENSIVE, 1941 (AAR)

There may be a huge number of units opposing you at a place along the front, but remember not all of them can engage you at once. You don't necessarily have to fear enormous stacks. Only those divisions whose combat width will fit can engage – there's a chance that when you've shattered some units, or forced them to withdraw, that fresh divisions may surge forward. Or even when a combat event widens the front, briefly. But if you have sufficient strength to make a good showing against just those divisions that will fit along the front, do not completely discount that battle, even if it looks like you're attacking a huge concentration of the enemy.

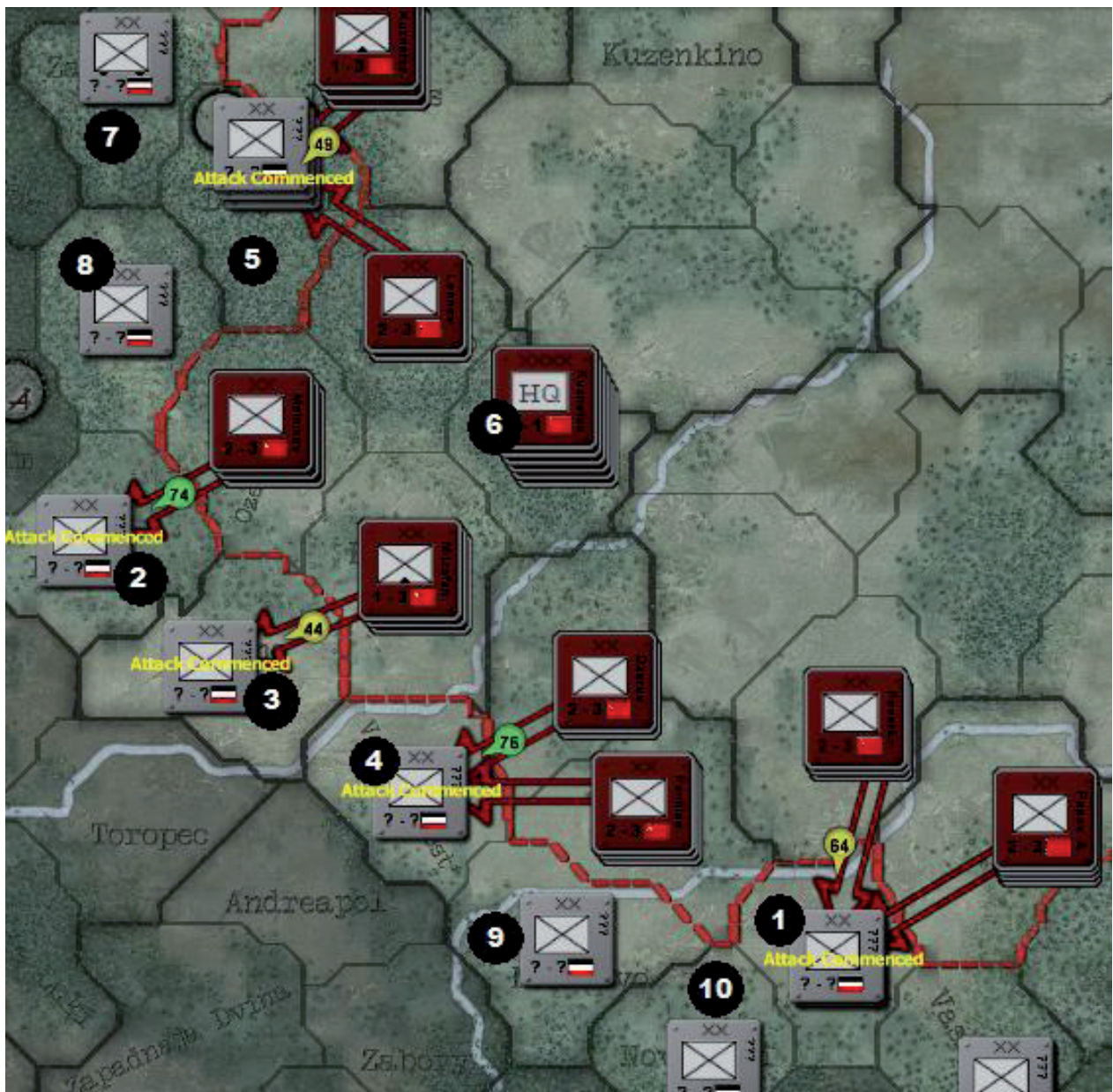
By looking at relative strengths and possible movement options, you can figure out the likelihood of an attack at different points along your front, and the likely avenues of attack. Just put yourself in the enemy's shoes, and analyze your own line as if you're wanting to attack it.

ACHIEVING GOALS

Any battle that fails to achieve your goals may well be a strategic loss. If it achieves part of your goals, then it may be a strategic draw.

There are two possible goals on most battlefields. Either capturing/defending objectives, or destroying the enemy. Which goal you should pursue at any one time will be determined by your situation.

In many cases, your goal will be to achieve a breakthrough, but because that is really an enormous topic of its own, it also has its own chapter, later on.



At the start of the Dec. 1941 scenario, the Germans have exhausted themselves after months of campaigning, and winter has set in. This is the Soviets' chance. German forces near Moskva are still too strong to effectively attack, but in the region surrounding Ostaskov (6) their units are weak and thinly spaced, and the balance favors the Soviets. The German unit at (1) is exposed, and can be attacked from 3 directions. I'm only attacking from two, because the third province must attack in a different direction. Points (2), (3), and (4) are a general broad front of advance where only one German division protects each province. In attack (2) its exposure is to only one province. Attack (4) was exposed to 3 provinces, which I could have taken advantage of, but I'm betting all three provinces will fall quickly. Don't be fooled by the low percentages shown in the attack bubbles. Once the battles get rolling, those numbers will go up quickly, especially with the application of airpower from Moskva and Leningrad (at extreme range – some shorter ranged air units will have to be stripped out of units and left to other missions closer to home). The attack at (5) is not necessary, except to pin that large number of units so they can't flank the attack upon (2). The single motorised division at (7) is not much of a threat, nor is the one infantry division at (8) – if he attacks, it will be of little consequence to the attack upon (2). I've chosen to have all my units committed to win at (2) than to strip one division out and pin (8), though that might be a mistake. The strategic reserve at (6) can move forward as the southwestern attacks develop. The division at (9) could have been attacked or pinned, but I preferred to combine all forces to make (4) fall more quickly (which it did). At that time, (9) will be outflanked, but I should then attack there to prevent him trying to outflank me. It's not easily noticed at first glance, but (10) also has a short border to the north, and could have interfered, but I didn't pin it for the same reasons as noted for (9).



TACTICS FOR SUCCESS

“Again, speed in action must be cultivated; the power to think quickly in an emergency is one of the greatest assets both of the boxer and the commander; and the power to move quickly often gives to a body of troops, as to a boxer, the advantage of surprise.”

– Field Marshal Archibald Percival Wavell

Remember that as you move, you'll have to attack any enemies that stand in your way. This goes for the other side, too – if you're advancing, and you end up in a province where the enemy is trying to move also, they will attack you (often at bad odds, since they weren't necessarily expecting to mount an attack). This might be called a “meeting engagement.”

If you're in a generalized process of advancement, and the enemy attacks you before you have the opportunity to attack him, it's called a “spoiling attack.” These can be frustrating, because they choose the terms of the combat, not you. Hopefully, you can flank their attack and gain an advantage. Otherwise, you must wait for it to resolve itself, presumably in your favor (or else it would be considered a counterattack or counteroffensive!).

ENTRENCHMENT

If you're not dug in yet, and you don't think the enemy will wait for you to dig in, you can use one unit to attack along every front where the enemy has units. Keep them busy until your other units have dug in. There's no way to use this same tactic again to allow the rest to dig in, because they'd have to leave their entrenchment which defeats the purpose. You could use adjacent units to keep the enemy busy, but in most cases you'd want those units to be entrenching too. This at least allows you to get a portion of your force deeply dug in. After 10 days, you can stop the attack and your other units will have as long to dig in as it takes the enemy to attack.

WATCHING THE FRONT

Even once you've already committed your armies to attack in certain places, keep an eye on the front like a hawk. If you're being prudent, and you're only attacking in places where your odds seem the very best, you will have strong forces just sitting along other parts of the front. As your attacks proceed, the enemy will begin shifting his armies to respond, which may weaken parts of his defensive line. If you see a hole opening, where your odds are suddenly better than they were just a day before, seize the opportunity, and dive on in!

If you have a combat that is generally going well, but one or more

divisions are having a rough time of it, and their organisation or strength is getting dangerously low, pay enough attention to know when to pull them out of the line. At the right time, manually select them to retreat to the rear. The other units will continue the combat, with slightly diminished effectiveness, but soon if you have reserves they may move up. In fact, if you do have strong reserves, it is probably a good idea to pull fought-out units back sooner. The exception would be if you really need to hold, and you're already losing. In those cases, you'll face a choice between fighting as hard as you can with all your units, or pulling some back and hoping they'll have time to recover before the next defence line must stand.

The easiest way to keep track of your units is to check unit tooltips on the map every day or so. This way, you don't even have to enter any interface, unless you need more detail on a battle to gain more information.

STALLING & GRIDLOCK

Sometimes, you will become mired in a sort of “gridlock” along your battlefronts. It may be frustrating, because you have a series of endless battles where your forces hold a moderate advantage, but none of which seem likely to turn into a breakthrough. In these cases, sometimes it's best to try to “shake up” the situation. For instance, can you withdraw one division from a battle, and have them circle around to a flanking position? The unit will suffer a “delay” penalty after battle, which may prevent them from moving right away, but it's okay because otherwise they would still have been locked in combat anyway. Once they can move, opening a second front on the enemy's flank will increase the combat penalties against the defender, and may give you the edge you need to win the battle more quickly.

This concept can be expanded. Withdraw a certain proportion of your front line without weakening any point enough that your units will lose the battle. Have them wait out their delay period and recover their organisation (and a little of their strength), and then send them against a likely point in the line – new troops, fresh and restored! As you do this, pull out the tired units already in combat there – withdraw them to the

WISE CHOICE OF ATTACK LOCATIONS

Some places along the front are obvious places to attack, others are obvious places to defend. Other places are not so clear.



Danzig (1) should be an easy decision, because of its port, its airbase, and its connection to East Prussia. It's also undefended. Suwalki (10), in the extreme east, is another target we'd love to take because of its airbase (Germany needs it), but it's complicated by being opposed by only an infantry division and a detached brigade – it's doubtful they can take the Polish cavalry plus reinforcements without additional help, and the infantry division may be required to pin Polish defenders in (9) unless you're willing to use the division in Johannisburg to pin (9) instead of advancing against (8). The rest of the attack might concentrate on where the Poles are weakest – (3), (4), & (8). However, Polish defenders in other provinces should be pinned, or else they will launch flanking attacks, spoiling your advance. A workable alternative might be a combined attack upon the exposed province at (7), which guards the gateway to Warsaw, immediately south. Germans in Marienburg would need to pin (3) and hold off a flank from (2) until relief could come from Danzig several hours later. The divisions at Rosenberg would need to pin (4) and (5), while the HQ unit could cautiously open a 2nd front against (3). One division from Allenstein would need to pin (6) while the rest hit (7) in coordination with units from Sensberg and Johannisburg (the division from Johannisburg would have to deal with a flanking attack from (8) also). The units further east would have to pin the units opposite them. This would be a risky strategy, balancing the possibility of a quick victory against the possibility of eating up all of East Prussia's supplies before then. German units in East Prussia in the '39 setup are weak and badly positioned, not to mention poorly supplied. The German-Polish frontier in the west will more probably be where the first major gains happen. Once supply is established through Danzig, things in Prussia will improve.

rear – and your fresh units will soon appear on the front line against the exhausted enemy. Ideally, this will result in a breakthrough. If not, you'll soon have yet more troops ready (the ones you just pulled off the line) who can try this in another location.

MAINTAINING YOUR UNITS

It is true that a shattered unit will retain what proportion of experience survived the battle (this was noted in a developer's diary). But better yet, if you don't let your unit be shattered in the first place, it will retain more experience because it doesn't have to go through that tragedy.

If your units do get shattered, they will withdraw to the theatre supply point (not either the national capital, or the theatre HQ, both of which were mentioned previously).

"The theatre supply point should be the capital in the theatre area(s) covering your homeland, or the supply depot for overseas. If

in doubt use supply map mode and the province tooltip will tell you where your forces are getting supplied from." - Mark Potter (Potski), Durham, UK

WHEN ENEMY "VICTORIES" DON'T MATTER

Don't let secondary considerations distract you from your main goal. If the enemy is driving into your territory, but it's mostly land which lacks value, let them have it while you pursue their valuable prizes and win the war.

This is especially true of warfare with more than one front, or theatre. If Italy, or Britain, for instance, sends the vast majority of their forces into another theatre, but leaves only a skeleton crew at home, that's the best opportunity to try to invade their homeland. Naturally, this will be guarded against in most cases, but certainly not always. If a country's main offensive causes them to remove troops from their jobs of guarding important targets, this can be taken advantage of.

COMBAT RESERVES & STRATEGIC RESERVES

There are three types of “reserves” in HOI 3, two of which are officially called reserves – your reserve divisions, and your combat reserves (the ones shown in the combat interface who aren’t on the actual frontage) – but there’s another type of reserve. When you keep divisions one or two provinces back from the front line, those are your strategic reserve.

If you are attacked from the flank, additional units may be called upon to defend that flank, but it’s to your advantage if there are units not already involved in combat. That saves you the powerful negatives of fighting on two frontiers at once.

MULTIPLE COMBATS

If you are attacked from another direction, in a new combat, you will suffer a serious combat penalty. It may be best to end the main attack, but don’t do so automatically. If you had left some units out of the main combat, these might have been enough to field the new front, and your main attack may not suffer.

Multiple combat penalties only apply to one of the two battles, but which one is important to keep in mind.

COMBAT ROUNDS & DAMAGE

When attacking, the higher a unit’s modified hard or soft attack value is, the more likely it is to be able to shoot at and damage the enemy. The higher a target unit’s defensiveness (or toughness, if attacking), the more likely it is to be able to defend against the shot, and avoid damage. Basically, this means that if the combined total of the attacker’s modified values along the combat front are higher than the combined total of the defender’s modified values along the combat front, the chances are good that significant damage will be inflicted upon the target (usually organisation, but some strength). Therefore, being outnumbered or outclassed (i.e. the enemy’s unit values are stronger than yours) is very dangerous, and will probably result in eventual defeat. This is why numerical superiority is so important, as is supremacy of technology, which will increase unit values.

All combat on one front takes place as one battle, although a new flanking attack may create a multiple combat. Damage to each division divided between brigades, including support brigades. Each shot does damage to a single division, chosen randomly.

At most times, during battle, the value you must watch is your units’ organisation, not their strength. Strength is important, of course, but most units which are forced to retreat still have significant strength remaining, but have lost most of their organisation. If a unit which has lost organisation can be moved back before it shatters, it can spend several hours or a couple of days recovering organisation and will then be almost as combat ready as it was before (absent a relatively small percentage of its strength – whatever was destroyed in the earlier combat).

Obviously, when a unit is greatly outnumbered, it is at a disadvantage because all damage is concentrated on fewer divisions, not spread out between them. The combat front concept limits this, thankfully, in a more realistic way. But a single unit, or a couple, cannot hope to hold out forever while being pummeled by several units, absorbing all the hits they can deal out. Factors such as entrenchment, fortification, good defensive values, etc. may help on the defense, and make a seemingly hopeless battle survivable.

Single brigades are ineffective due to their small attack value, which gets washed out by the defensive values of the enemy. Theoretically, single brigades fighting each other would have a better chance, but this is unlikely to ever happen.

UNIT MANAGEMENT

If you start building up a lot of shattered units at your theatre supply points, you may be better off setting them to not reinforce. It will take a long time for them to come back up to a decent combat strength, and it may be that those reinforcements are more needed on the front lines, rather than several provinces away. If your front line units are in good shape, you can set them to start reinforcing again. On the other hand, if they reappear near to ongoing combat, you may want them

THE FALL OF FRANCE

Before 1936, most world observers would have rated France as the leading military power of the world. The Royal Navy ruled the seas, but the British Army, as always, was small by comparison. The United States had barely any standing military at all. Italy’s adventurous military was sizeable, but not entirely respected, and the growing strength in Russia and Germany wasn’t entirely recognized. It was the French land, naval and air forces which held the world in awe, with its tanks, its modern monoplane fighting aircraft, massive battleships and approximately 6 million men liable to be called up to fight, 4 ½ million of which were trained reserves. By the time of the Battle of France, in the spring of 1940, France had 3 million men under arms, sheltering behind the seemingly impregnable Maginot Line. This image of invulnerability was shattered in just one month when the Germans launched their **Fall Gelb** battle plan.

On May 14, 1940, the new British prime minister, Winston Churchill, was awakened by a disturbing telephone call from French prime minister Paul Reynaud. “We are beaten,” he said. “We have lost the battle.” He explained, “The front is broken near Sedan; they are pouring through in great numbers with tanks and armoured cars.” Churchill, undaunted, was convinced more could be done. He flew to France the next day to see what he could do to help. In a private meeting with the French government and top commanders, he asked, “Où est la masse de manoeuvre? (Where is your strategic reserve?)” General Maurice Gamelin, the commander in chief, shrugged and replied, “Aucune (There is none).”

Application: The first application, obviously, is to have a strategic reserve. It’s always tempting to have all of your units at the front, but first off there’s no room for masses of units at the front (even your reserves count toward the stacking penalty, so those units would just be in the way). Secondly, only about 3-4 divisions will actually be able to participate in combat anyway. Thirdly, a strategic reserve is flexible – it can go where you need it, because it’s not stuck in contact with the enemy. Fourthly, a strategic reserve is just a good idea – it can save you from an enemy breakthrough because it’s a ready-made counterpunch.

to reinforce so that they're not vulnerable to destruction if the enemy breaks through.

SUPPLY

Supply can't go through lakes or other large bodies of water (except for straits, unless they're blocked by enemy naval units), so large lakes can be useful terrain features if you're trying to isolate or constrict supply to a group of enemy units. Examine the infrastructure map to see which provinces are obvious routes for supply, and use your divisions and airpower to try to cut off those routes.

KNOW WHEN TO RETREAT

If you're caught in an unwinnable battle, and you have an option to retreat, it's usually best to do so unless there's some important objective you're needing to hold for some reason. By withdrawing from combat, you preserve your forces, you may be able to regain your organisation, and you can hopefully reposition for a more defensible battle line. Hold, then retreat.

Keep a close eye on your combat units which are engaged in long battles. If you see that some of them are losing organisation to a dangerous degree, where they might soon shatter or be forced to withdraw, it is almost always preferable to command them to retreat and save their combat strength for another day. Careful which ones you pull out, though, because the remaining units will have to take on the added burden.

This will probably give them time to recover their organisation, so that when they next enter combat their strength can be employed sustainably. These units have been run ragged, and need to be retreated and rested if possible. If they're in supply, they will regain their organisation, and if IC is applied (and if you've not set them to not reinforce) they will also regain their strength slowly.

The primary reason why you might not want to remove a unit from combat, despite its dwindling organisation, is if the unit is performing a duty of the utmost importance.

Remember the land combat version of the "Rensselaer Paradigm" (noted in the Naval chapter) – if you're in combat and about to be forced to retreat, but there's an enemy division that's closer to shattering than you are, it's in your interest to continue the battle until the enemy breaks first, then you run as quickly as you can. Make the enemy shatter – don't wait around to watch the consequences and have it happen to you too.

FLANKING ATTACKS

When the enemy attacks your troops, and you're vulnerable, it's sometimes worth distracting them by attacking from another province, even at unfavorable odds. This will give the enemy a -50 multiple combat penalty in the first combat (the one you were worried about), and will contribute to the wearing down of the enemy. Their attack may end up being less successful, or they may even decide to stop the first attack in order to deal better with your second. In a perfect world, you could then stop your second attack – the one at unfavorable odds – and things return to the way they were before the enemy first threatened you! They can always try again, but then again so could you.

BROAD FRONT ATTACKS

Many commanders throughout history, right up until World War I and beyond, have tended to prefer broad front attacks along the entire line,

hoping to eventually win victory by causing more attrition to the enemy than they would take themselves. This is usually a gamble. Countries with a huge supply of manpower to "bet" on such a strategy may actually prefer this costly method to a more mobile war of breakthrough and maneuver.

This strategy requires vast numbers of divisions, staged one province behind the other, ready to move forward when the first rank is exhausted or expended.

Two can play the attrition game, at least for a short time. Pull your disorganised units back, and let your other divisions hold the line until they've recovered their organization and can move forward into the province again.

While countries using the Human Wave Doctrine is most likely to employ this sort of strategy, those countries which use the Grand Battle Plan Doctrine or Superior Firepower doctrines may utilize a smarter alternative. Clever concentration of combined arms units with good attack and toughness values and a wise rotation strategy may actually succeed in costing the enemy more attrition along a broad front than they themselves take, even if their manpower reserves are not strong enough for typical human wave tactics.

AGGRESSIVENESS AND SURPRISE

Aggressive countries can invade their targets before they have a chance to mobilize if their moves toward war are carefully managed.

Be bold, not foolhardy. Aggressive decisions are often rewarded in battle, but there's a limit imposed by common sense and memories of George Armstrong Custer.

If you see your enemy moving his divisions, that means he's given up his entrenchment (though not any fortress protection they have in that province) and so you may consider attacking there instead of the entrenched position you had in mind to attack.

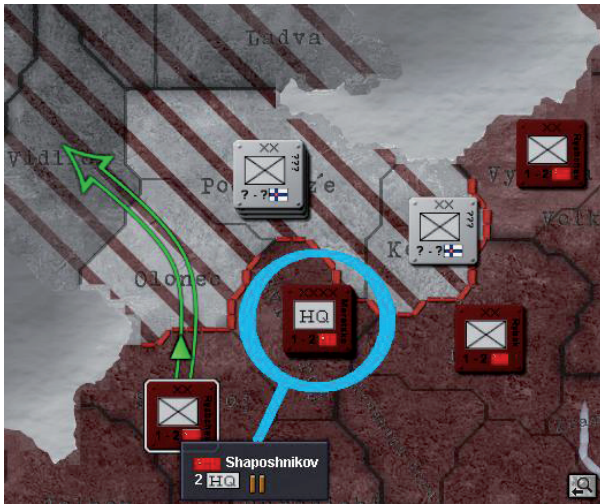
Smoke 'em if you got 'em. If you're likely to lose your units – airpower, if you can't fly it to a safer base, or other units in certain circumstances – you might as well use them. There's no purpose to "saving" a doomed unit as long as possible, unless you're fighting a delaying action. On the other hand, there's no reason to intentionally put them out there, either. This is mainly a lesson for small powers which are facing clear defeat. You might as well do all you can to inflict damage upon your enemy, even if there's really no hope.

Take advantage and initiative. Some players may even be tempted to use their units' 30 day reserve if they are confident they can get some benefit out of the action and not lose the unit to encirclement.

Not only will you sometimes find an unexpected opportunity, because you made an unanticipated choice, but you may throw the enemy into a panic. This is one of those few areas where you're as likely to cause a human, multiplayer opponent to make a mistake as you are to cause confusion for the AI.

MAKE UP YOUR MIND!

Indecision in command can be as costly in HOI 3 as it is in real combat. For instance, any change in the direction of movement wastes whatever movement had already been ordered for that unit. Certainly, there are times when such changes are warranted, by the importance of unexpected needs, but always consider what the cost will be if you change your mind. Sometimes, even if there's a new need, it's better just to allow the unit to move as it was ordered. In fact, there are times when the unit will be in a



This Finnish unit has opened a hole in his line, presumably so he can attack in greater force against your HQs. This demonstrates a choice for your infantry division. You could move your unit defensively, and follow the enemy, protecting your HQs. Or, instead, sometimes the best defense is a good offense. You could take advantage of the hole he's opened, and threaten his rear area. He's in a bad situation now, whether he attacks or not, because you have taken the initiative rather than reacting. This is a defensive lesson too, as you should not open such opportunities for your enemy.

better position to do what you need if you allow it to finish moving into a new province than if you stopped it and started it anew.

The "attack delay" function, which prevents your units from attacking again for a number of hours after breaking off an earlier attack, must be considered when you're changing your mind about orders. You must keep yourself from thinking you can stop a unit's attack, and immediately send the unit into a different combat. That's not possible, and the only result would be that your unit will sit idly for a couple of days, confounding both, your initial orders and your new ones! Take time considering your options before issuing commands, and be just as careful before you change your commands.

RECOVERING FROM BATTLEFIELD DEFEAT

In the chapter on Breakthroughs, you will see how disastrous a successful military campaign of envelopment can be. What do you do if your enemy has just demonstrated how good they are at the tactic?

Don't panic – there are things you can do!

Your first step is to get your divisions out of harm's way. If you have units which are about to be encircled, pull them out as quickly as you can. Once they are surrounded, it's going to be hard to get them out, because they're less able to assist in their own defense.

Actual breakout attempts are rare, and even more rarely successful. Usually, you're going to have to go get them. Considering that you've just been defeated in such a way that they got surrounded in the first place, that's likely to be difficult. But not impossible. Grab your reserves, if you have them, and take whatever resources you have, and attempt a "reverse breakthrough" – try to defeat the enemy's divisions which have just broken through. This may be easier because they just got there – they haven't

had a chance to dig in, or to make any other defensive preparations. They're most vulnerable to a counterattack, and there's a possibility you may succeed in reversing the situation.

If not, or if you judge there is no likelihood of rescuing your surrounded divisions, leave them. Forget them. They're no longer part of your army – the best thing they can do is cause your enemy to have to expend their energy defeating them once and for all. You have more important things to worry about.

Ideally, the enemy breakthrough is not all that significant. They have several divisions on your side of the line, but you have plenty of reserves – strategic reserves or otherwise – which you can use to keep them from coming much further. Your job now is to delay them. This isn't much different from preventing their first breakthrough attempt. Just keep them from moving, so that they lose momentum, and then hit them hard with a counterattack.

What if they've really, **really** broken through? Pull back. Pull back your units to some defensive line. Your development of a new defensive line is critical, because without it, the enemy will just keep going. If the enemy's breakthrough is significant, you may have to pull back quite a ways to find a good defensive position. Anything right there where they are will immediately be under attack, and that's not what you need. Units at the front should flee. This is a major strategic withdrawal – most of your units should keep away from combat with the enemy, and don't get delayed.

The rest? If the enemy is pursuing your units quickly, you may have to use some of your divisions to fight "delaying actions." A few divisions will sacrifice themselves for the good of the many, so the rest of your units can get away and have time to form that new defensive line.

Meanwhile, units from behind the lines need to "coalesce." Pull everything you have together, and try to construct a new front line. Use defensible terrain, as best you can. Your new line should be in defensible terrain as far toward the front as possible – no sense giving up territory unnecessarily – without being in immediate danger of being engaged. This new line must have time, though, to dig in, which means a couple of days at least. The more, the better. Delaying actions buy you time to do this.

Those units you left behind will pull back when they're nearing defeat. Don't let them get shattered – you still need their strength. Have them fall back upon your defensive line, and join it. If they're really badly damaged, have them keep going – these will form your reserve behind the new defensive line, once they've had a chance to rest a while.

At the first sign of real trouble – when you recognize you're about to lose, and lose big, and that you'll have to form a new defensive line, you may need to change your production priorities. If you have any doubt you have enough units to hold that new line, start building a bunch of garrison or militia units – whatever units have the lowest (or almost the lowest) build-time, start building them, and prioritize them to the top of the production queue. You may desperately need them soon.

Then, stand. Stand and hold, and hope it's enough. Once you've succeeded, start planning your comeback, in the form of a new counteroffensive.

PARADROPS

Paratroops must be handled carefully, or else they will be destroyed or run ragged. When landed, they have a -30% combat penalty applied. This is in addition to whatever other penalties they might face, due to terrain,

nighttime (don't land paratroops into combat at night – just don't!), etc.

It is always best to land paratroops into an unoccupied province behind or beside the enemy positions. This way, they don't have to suffer a combat penalty for being paradropped. They will take a bit to regain their bearings, and then can attack.

Sometimes, the enemy will attack the paratroops before they have the opportunity to attack as they intended. Plan for this. It becomes important to break through to where they've landed, or else paratroops can easily find themselves in danger for being out of supply for too long. Consider airdropping supplies, if you can protect the transports.

Definitely have an exit strategy (presumably an advance strategy) to get to the paratroops and keep them from being overwhelmed behind enemy lines.

ARMoured UNITS

Tanks are very dependent upon the terrain and the weather. Maybe don't keep them on the front all the time – bring them in when conditions are favorable. Isolated pushes... Don't let them get worn down in everyday combat, as tempting as it may be to use them in every battle.

Tanks are “slippery” because they're fast. You must use your units to pin them, or else they will show up in places where you won't like them, and didn't expect them.

Some armies are content to push forward as a line and force the enemy back one province at a time. This is largely the strategy used in World War I, because they lacked fast units who could move forward before the enemy could close any break in their line. The generals gambled that they could overwhelm the enemy troops assigned to a limited front, and could push forward more than one province, but this still resulted in only a few provinces changing hands in a region. It would take many of these gradual advances to change the course of the war.

The alternative use of armoured divisions is discussed in the next chapter...

BREAKTHROUGHS

“The art of concentrating strength at one point, forcing a breakthrough, rolling up and securing the flanks on either side, and then penetrating like lightning deep into his rear, before the enemy has time to react.”

– Field Marshal Erwin Rommel

Ultimately, the most efficient form of attack against a front line is a strategic breakthrough (not to be confused with a tactical breakthrough, which is a combat event). Breakthroughs usually require fast units, as described earlier as scouts. A breakthrough involves concentrating enough force at one point in the front line to push the enemy back or destroy the defending units. The breakthrough force then continues to push, with more units joining in (as shown in illustration) with the goal of finding provinces where there are no defending units and exploiting the hole to move into provinces behind other defending units. This has the advantage of cutting those units off from supply, ultimately making them easier to defeat.

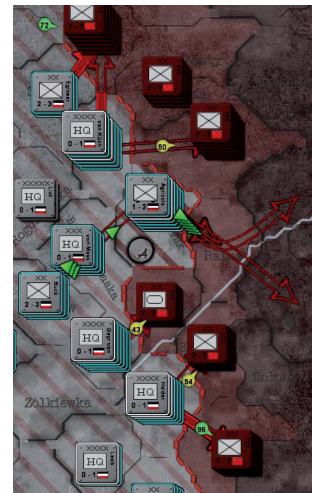
A breakthrough is often referred to in military journals as an “envelopment.” There is also the “double envelopment,” which seeks to multiply or ensure the effect of one breakthrough by joining it with another in a “pincer” movement – a breakthrough at two points, intended to come together behind the enemy lines, having cut off the enemy force from its rear.

DECIDING WHEN AND WHERE TO BREAK THROUGH

Obviously, breakthrough attacks are most easily mounted against exposed provinces which neighbor more than two provinces held by the attacker. That allows “multiple fronts” to be brought to bear against the targeted province, and many more divisions may participate, speeding the attack to a successful conclusion. These attacks from the side of the main thrust may be set to “support,” and not to advance, as described earlier.

Remember that the fog of war will hide enemy reserves, but you can send air units overhead to scout the territory.

Sometimes you will want to gradually develop a breakthrough attempt. You can probe the enemy line with a tentative breakthrough attempt first. If the defenses seem too strong, you can stop the attack and wait for another opportunity. However, if you have found a soft spot, you should be ready to convert the nearby region into a series of supporting attacks, and perhaps also watch for other opportunities to develop a breakthrough elsewhere in the line as the enemy shifts resources in response to your first attempt.



Maybe position the caption to the side of the picture – Caption: Here, we see a couple of corps (middle) which have broken through, entered their first province which has been vacated by their defeated enemy, and they’re planning to split – one corps in each direction. Other units are shown pinning the sides of the breach, and another couple of breakthrough attempts (north and south) hope to become the other pincer in a double envelopment. Another couple of corps are moving up toward the breach location – one to hold the breach, the other to follow through and exploit the hole.

FORCE COMPOSITION

Breakthrough tactics require careful attention to what units are to be committed to the fight. You want your fastest and most powerful units (thankfully, these qualities coincide in your armoured units) to attack first, with enough supporting units to contribute to the attack and fill the reserves which may sometimes be advanced into combat by combat events.

Blitzkrieg is not necessarily limited to tanks. Anything fast helps, though tanks combine two important assets – speed and punch (power).

Cavalry often lacks punch, but can be used to exploit a breakthrough once infantry creates a hole (which is somewhat backward – instead of armour creating a hole, and punching through with infantry following, the cavalry will hold back until infantry succeeds, and then will rush forward as the armour would, and infantry would follow). Mechanised or motorised infantry are also potentially useful. Contrary to common belief, Poland and France fell largely at the hands of motorised troops with armoured car support, rather than to columns of German tanks, though it was tanks which served as the point of the spear.

Your fastest land units – cavalry or light armour – can be used as “scouts” to find out what’s in front of you, and to grab provinces quickly to cut off the enemy. Envelopments are much harder without fast units like these.

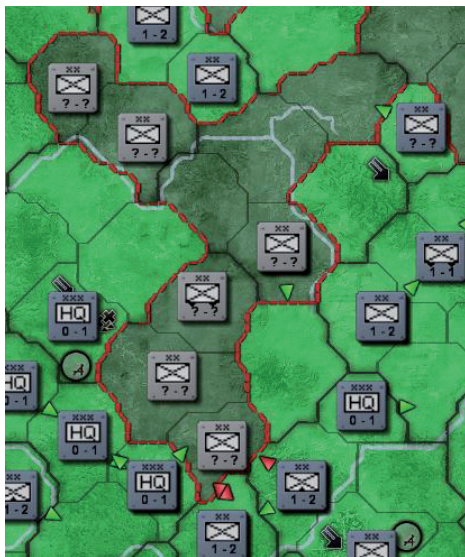
Armour is the only thing with the strength, speed and power to really contest a breakthrough, so it’s very important that you pin these units with supporting attacks. If you don’t they’ll rush in and defeat your plan.

The advantage of self-propelled artillery is that it has the speed to follow along on breakthroughs to provide support for armoured divisions.

SUPPORT

Efforts to encircle often carry with them a related risk of becoming encircled yourself. When trying, it’s important to pin down any forces which might move to intercept you with other units just outside of the breakthrough point, even if it means attacking at seriously bad odds. If you can achieve a breakthrough without anyone intercepting you, the sacrifice will have been worth it.

This is where you can use the advanced movement orders accessed through control-rightclick (see L1.1 in the Manual) to select adjacent units to “support” the attack without moving forward when a breakthrough is



A courageous breakthrough attempt which is likely to end in disaster! This German thrust looks remarkably successful at first glance, but the whole German army is about to be cut off by one French division back at the initial breach point. German supply is probably already cut off to most of those divisions. Watch for the enemy to make stupid moves like this, and be sure you don’t make this mistake!

achieved. If too many units move forward, the most important units may lose their access to supplies because any breakthrough is also a narrow channel for supplies, which has a limited throughput.

Whenever there’s a critical encirclement battle underway, that’s where your airpower should be employed – making sure your side wins.

SECOND STEPS

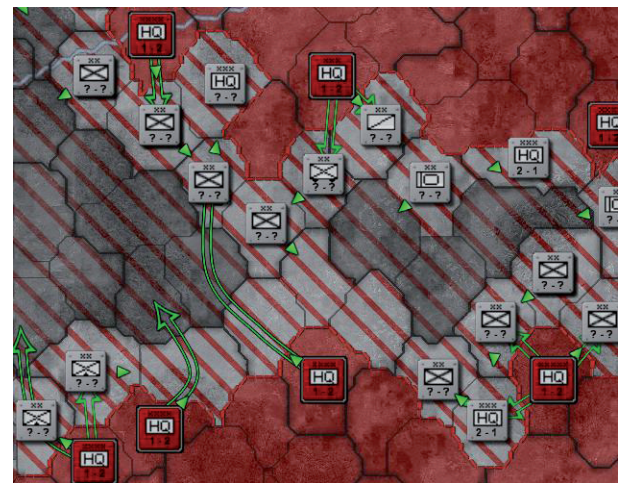
When you break through the lines, you may have two or more seemingly empty provinces you could choose to move into. But if any enemy units survived your combat, they will retreat into one of these provinces. If you fight them again, they will be easy to beat. But if you want to avoid them, to keep them from slowing you down, it’s best if you go around them. You can test where they’re going by pausing and checking the colour of the movement arrows into each province. The one that’s red is where he’s retreating.

Once you’ve achieved a breakthrough, it’s very important that you have infantry forces ready to move forward and backfill the pathway, as well as the province where the armoured forces (or whatever they were) moved forward from. The next, related, step is to use these infantry divisions to widen the breakthrough point, if possible.

COUNTERATTACKING AGAINST BREAKTHROUGH ATTEMPTS

Careful when moving through gaps created by breakthroughs. You may find more resistance from reserves, or anti-tank units behind the front lines.

If you’re expecting a breakthrough, you may wish to position anti-tank brigades in positions behind the line in order to move forward and plug the breakthrough before it fully develops. Assuming the enemy breakthrough is led by tanks (a good bet), your anti-tank units may be more useful behind the front than on it, because the enemy may become aware of where they are if they’re on the line, and avoid those locations. But a good anti-tank reserve behind the line can remain undetected, may have more time to react, and can be ready to stop the armoured breakthrough. You normally will not have enough anti-tank units to spread them all along the front. This strategy allows you to make the most of what you do have so that they’re there when it counts.

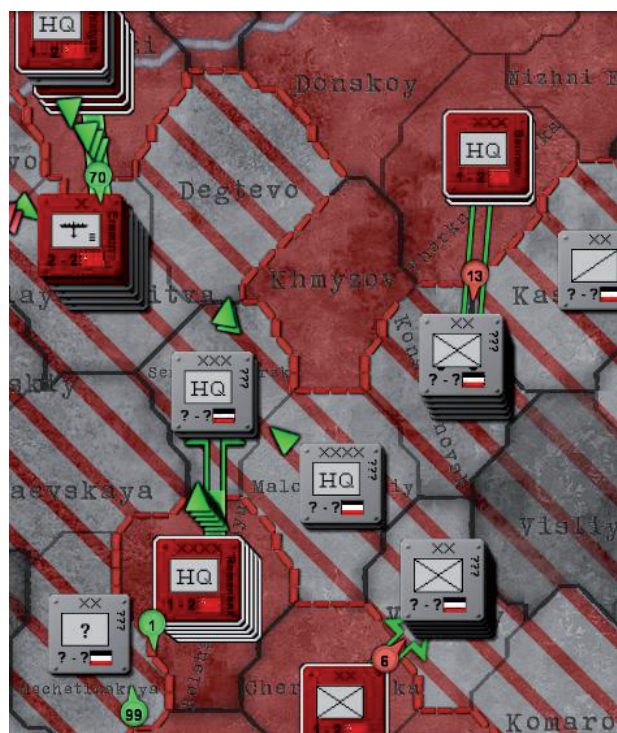


When you’re trying to cut off a large enemy offensive, don’t go for half measures, or they’ll either halt your counterattack or they’ll pull out before you can complete it.

If you've invested heavily in anti-tank units, you may intersperse them in a defensive attempt to avoid breakthroughs and envelopment attempts. Or you may use them in an offensive role to defend a breakthrough attempt, because the enemy will generally use his armoured units to respond to any breakthroughs and attempt to prevent encirclement. Draw the enemy armour into battle, and cut them to pieces with your anti-tank and armoured units.

A well-played counteroffensive can turn a breakthrough on its head and achieve the opposite result than intended by the attacker. Because of this danger, some players are too cautious to go too far in the direction of mounting breakthrough attempts. This has historically been true of many generals, also.

When the enemy has successfully broken through your lines, that's when you need to bring pressure upon the base of the spearhead. If the enemy makes a mistake, and fails to guard the thrust with sufficient infantry or other units, it's possible you could turn the enemy breakthrough into an encirclement of his own units, which would be ideal for you.



A nearly successful counteroffensive. The Germans are desperately concentrating their armour on the constriction from both directions, but they may be too late.

FOLLOWTHROUGH

If you attempt a breakthrough and it gets stopped, it's not always stopped for good. If you're channeling a lot of divisions through that initial hole, even if the enemy is rushing its own divisions to oppose you, there's a chance you can still exploit the attempt. A well-prepared breakthrough attempt is a little like a water hose – if you block the flow, the pressure builds, and it's possible it still may build enough pressure to break through, or even to burst out in another direction.

Resistance will tend to build at a breakthrough location if reserves exist. You'll start to punch through, and the enemy will manage his

resources to bring everything to bear against that point. This is why a coordinated pincer movement is often necessary – plan two breakthrough attempts to work together, dividing the enemy defenses. If one thrust gets stopped, hopefully the second can come through and support the other from behind the lines. In any case, even if only one succeeds, it will start to pinch off supply to the closed-in pocket. Make sure to protect your line of supply, or the same can happen to you!

Don't worry about giving up your spot along the frontier if you've just broken through. You're probably going to have a new frontier very soon, anyway, if your offensive is truly successful. Keep your eye on the goal. Make sure you're not in danger of being cut off yourself. Allow the enemy to move forward into your non-vital provinces if he likes, because that only puts him deeper into the bag when you close it.

If you have a steady stream of divisions to funnel into a breakthrough location, you don't have to garrison all the provinces along the path. The traveling units will defend the route if it's attacked. Otherwise, you will need to ensure some infantry or other defensive units are left behind in your wake as you move forward, so you don't get surrounded. Plan ahead, and have these units ready to move in when it's time.

Even before you completely encircle a unit, you may actually cut off or impair its line of supply. By reducing the routes for supply to reach the enemy unit, and by forcing supply to travel through only one or two provinces with limited throughput, you may cause the unit to go out of supply eventually. It may at least be forced to draw down its 30-day reserve of supplies, and if it's not replenished it will eventually be out of supply anyway.

In HOI 3 it's not always necessary for you to completely surround an enemy for him to be suffering serious supply shortages that may effectively put him out of supply. If you can constrict his lines – a "near" isolation, even if there's one province still open – then all of his units within that pocket will have to rely upon that one province to send all their supplies. The more units inside the pocket, the more trouble he'll have supplying them, especially if you have any way of directing airstrikes against his infrastructure there.

When it seems likely you will break through, the enemy AI will begin shifting defenses to cover the hole. This process may, helpfully, open up **new** holes!

If you're in the process of breaking through, but the enemy attacks your flank as you're trying to move into the rear, sometimes there will be an unoccupied province in enemy territory where you can "retreat" to! Just select it as movement, and as with any other battle, you will retreat from the battle in the direction you choose. This effectively allows you to avoid being pinned, though you accept certain limitations for having retreated. In reality you're "breaking the engagement" in order to continue deeper into enemy territory to continue your breakthrough.

HQS

As you break through, verify what HQ structures need to follow, and at what rates. You don't want to get your divisions in a perfect blitzkrieg position, only to have it lose the combat benefits provided by a nearby HQ. The HQ should follow into the rear areas at the extent of its range, as the path is secured. The HQ combat penalties are insufficient, though, to justify risking loss of the HQ just to keep it within range (then you'd **really** lose the HQ combat bonus!). Use your judgment.

OPERATION CITADEL AND THE FAILURE AT KURSK

The year 1943 was a time of dramatic reversals along the Eastern Front of Germany's war. In February, the surrounded German 6th Army had surrendered 91,000 soldiers into the hands of the Russians. Then, after a Soviet counteroffensive which overreached itself into the Donets region near Kharkov, Field Marshal Erich von Manstein led a move to cut off their spearhead, and the Kharkov campaign (sometimes known as the Third Battle of Kharkov) cost the USSR more than 50 divisions of men and materiel destroyed by the end of March. Then, in the summer of 1943, Field Marshal Gunther von Kluge's Army Group Center and Manstein's Army Group South combined in an operation intended to cut off and destroy the "Kursk Salient" – the bulge around the city of Kursk which the Soviets had pressed into the German lines. The problem was that Kursk was an obvious target, and numerous delays meant that any element of surprise had been lost. The Soviets had moved a tremendous amount of anti-tank weapons into the area, and had prepared defensive fortifications to meet the expected attack. Spies confirmed their suspicions and kept them informed, and over the course of four months of German delays they strengthened their defenses. Three full Soviet army groups, or "fronts," had been moved into the pocket – Bryansk, Center and Voronezh. When the blow struck, at the beginning of July, the Soviets were ready for it, and fought with stiffening resistance. It turned into the largest tank battle in history, and some even claim it as the largest air battle, too. Much of the battle, as fought by the Germans, was recognized as a failure of combined arms – German armour was superior to the Soviets' tanks except at close range, but could not cope against the Soviet infantry without its own infantry support, and the Russians were heavily fortified with light anti-tank weapons. The campaign was marked by sharp and massive aerial battles, with the situation on the ground largely impacted by close air support provided primarily by, on the German side, the Ju-87 Stuka, and on the Soviet side the IL-2 Sturmovik. While the most intense phase of the battle was over within two weeks, operations on both sides continued well into August. Losses on both sides were very high – statistics vary impossibly, but German losses in aircraft and tanks were several hundred each, while the Soviets lost more than 1,000 aircraft and at least a few thousand tanks. However, its ultimate effects were perhaps most profound upon the attitudes of the combatants. It was the first time a major German offensive had failed to break through the Soviet lines, and it proved to be the decisive end of German initiative on the Eastern Front. Also, the Germans did not have the ability to recoup their losses on an industrial or manpower level, whereas the USSR did.

Application: Have massive numbers of land and air units available for successful offensives or counteroffensives, and hit the exposed portions of the salient. The less time you take preparing your massive army, the less time your enemy has to recognize what you're doing and prepare. Attacking a prepared enemy is dangerous work. Better to surprise them by attacking where they don't expect it.



German Tiger tanks move forward into combat.



Soviet infantry riding into combat on the backs of tanks.

MOPPING UP

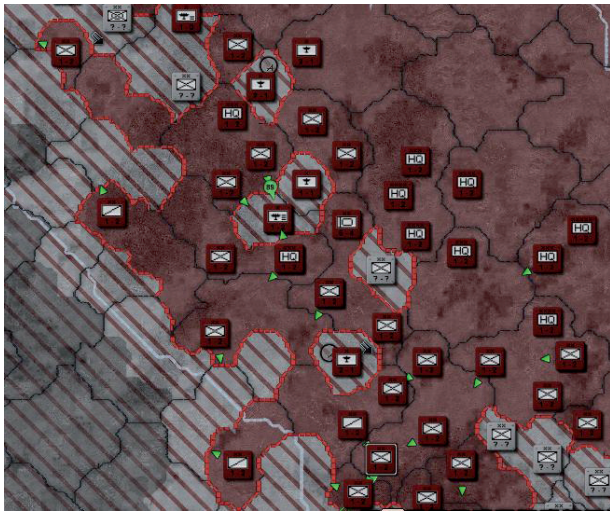
Eliminating pockets behind the lines is not always necessary, but when possible this will free up your units to head to the real front lines. If you've isolated the enemy in a surrounded pocket, that's great. Sometimes you may want to wait until they've expended their 30-day reserves, and they really start to accumulate the large penalties it's possible for surrounded units to get. However, remember these pockets can still occupy the attention of large numbers of your units, and you probably have urgent needs for those units to be elsewhere. The sooner you get rid of that pocket, the sooner they can move on. On the other hand, as time passes, there's less need for them to remain as screens, because the enemy units' potential threat decreases – you know that if they try to break out two weeks after being isolated, their time clock for effectiveness in combat is only half what it was before, so it may be easier for a small number of your

units to keep them in check.

There are times when you should consider bypassing enemy units, or even pockets of them. These times are always situational – sometimes it will be a good idea, other times, not so great.

Standard German Blitzkrieg tactics involved armoured and mechanised (or motorised) divisions breaking through and bypassing, while infantry and other slower units "mopped up" resistance as they moved forward. If you don't have the strength or inclination to "mop up" enemies left behind your lines, you can set a covering force to "guard" the enemy and make sure they don't do anything rash. Often, if the enemy is in a fortress or stronghold (which may be why you wanted to bypass them in the first place), they will stay there in a secure position rather than losing their advantageous ground to venture forth and cause mayhem.

Generally, if you believe you can keep a small screening force nearby



Once the breaches have isolated the enemy in pockets, they can be bypassed with relative security. Leave a few units behind to pin them if they try to move, because some of these units may still have a 30-day reserve of supplies. The rest of your units should rush forward and exploit the breaches, because you may not have another opportunity to run wild.

to prevent these bypassed divisions from cutting off your advance from behind, and if you can more or less ensure the enemy will not be able to break them out of their encirclement, then it should be safe to leave these units for later destruction. Eventually, you will want to get rid of them, preferably after they've run out of their supply reserves, so that your screening forces are free to return to the active battlefield.

Remember also that any damage you inflict upon isolated units cannot be repaired by them unless they can somehow get supply again. If you attack at first, trying to reduce them, and then stop after a while to rest your units, you will come back to the attack and find them not recovered.

WHEN TO STOP

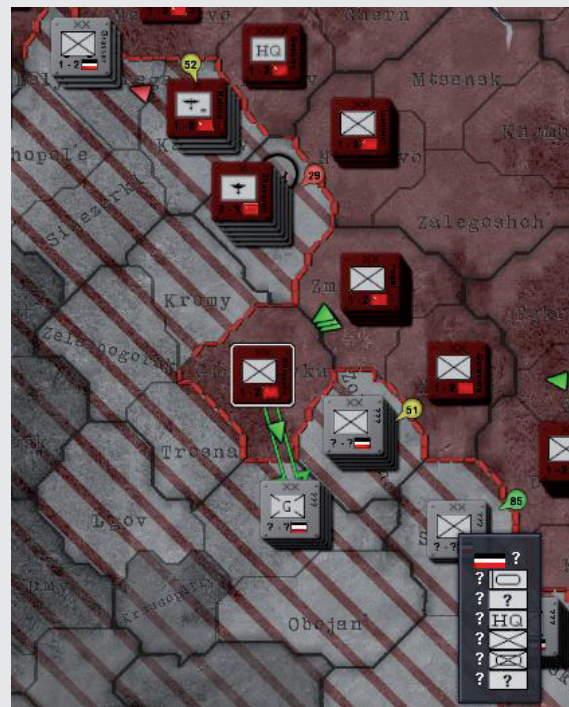
Breakthrough strategy is not a guarantee. You might not succeed in breaking through. You might stall before you can punch through all the way. Worse, breakthrough attempts require you to expose your units in some ways, placing them in danger of being cut off themselves. Such failures can actually set you up for disaster, and your war could instead turn foreverafter into a battle of static warfare and attrition. It could even put you on the defensive. Be ready for the consequences of failure so that you can avoid the worst possibilities.

Once you've made an advance and are done with immediate needs of capitalizing on a breakthrough, it's time to stabilize the line by placing units in defensive positions.

Plan ahead. When you start to sense opposition, and enemy reserves from far behind the lines begin to arrive in your vicinity, your free run is over. That's when you need to start setting up defensive lines.

A BREAKTHROUGH CASE STUDY

Sometimes you just find a "situation" and you have to do your duty even if it seems suicidal. A single division has just become the first to arrive in a newly captured province, and he's spotted several divisions of German armour, infantry and panzergrenadiers (mechanised infantry) at Kursk to the south. He's being followed by four more Soviet divisions, and the opportunity is there to drive north and cut off two or three German corps (maybe 10-15 divisions) in the Orel pocket. Sadly, that is not this Major General's job. He'll have to leave it for the follow-on divisions, because if he hesitates and allows the Germans to react first, the Germans will attack his province and become a blocking force which will draw any oncoming Soviet units into the battle. This division's duty must be to attack – to force the combat to occur in Kursk, not where he is – even though the battle will be at impossible odds and his division may ultimately be destroyed. This allows his comrades to slip behind his back and complete their important mission of encirclement to the north. Will they be able to spare one or two divisions to help him out against the Germans? That's a strategic decision for the commander – you. You may need all those divisions to the north (note that the other divisions which might stop them are already being pinned). On the other hand, they may all be at risk of encirclement themselves if the Germans can push forward out of Kursk.





“A country which cannot defend itself from aerial attack will find its air bases, its munitions centres, its military depots, its shipyards, and its great cities subjected to a devastating rain of bombs within a few hours of the declaration of hostilities.”

– Brig. Gen. P.R.C. Groves, RAF, in 1922.

ADVANTAGES OF AIRPOWER

Air units decide battles, because they are far more mobile, which means they can be more selective in where they attack.

Airpower can respond quickly to emerging threats and even to surprises, hooping to blunt attacks.

Airpower has a long range, relative to land units, and so it can be used to hit a wide variety of targets at will, provided they're within range of their airbase. By picking and choosing their targets, and not being locked into one combat with a delay for breaking it off, airpower can be the decisive element in a variety of battles.

MANAGING UNITS

There are competing schools of thought on air unit composition. Do you split into formations of like-kind air wings which can all perform the same mission, or do you combine fighters and bombers so the bombers have some protection?

You should prefer to create air units of three airwings apiece, as that is a useful number in combat which doesn't get a huge stacking penalty. Alternatively, you could organize two-airwing units, and have the flexibility of using them individually or sending two two-wing air units against the same target without too much of a stacking penalty.

Don't use too many air units in the same place, even if it's a really critical battle. Most battles have supporting units nearby which contribute to the battle by their presence, even if they're not actually in combat – send some of your planes to attack them and avoid the stacking penalties.

AIRBASES

A small airbase – even a level 1 base – can support the operation of multiple airwings. But they won't be able to recover losses or regain organisation, and so that's not a practical situation for long.

Building a large number of airwings without also increasing the size or number of airbases may put you in the awkward situation of not being able to effectively use all your shiny new planes. Increase the operational size

of your airbases in areas where you're likely to need them, and be ready to prepare “forward airfields” as you advance your lines.

Short range aircraft are not useful if you lack the IC to build forward airfields near where you need to use them.

Air units operating near their base (within radio range) have a combat bonus.

After a major air battle check capacities at your airbases before sending damaged units there. Rebase quickly to somewhere they can repair, if the damage is that bad.

COMMANDERS

Commanders of higher grade/rank can extend their traits and skill bonuses to more units before hitting their capacity limit and being “disqualified.” Every level of commander adds four to the number of units they can command. So a Major General can command four airwings and still pass on his bonus, while a Lieutenant General would be able to command eight, and so on.

There's a temptation to promote all of your commanders to higher positions, but those commanders will earn experience much more slowly.

OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Before using them, you need to ensure that your air units are in supply, or else they may be less effective and vulnerable.

If you need to take an air unit out of combat to recover, or for whatever reason, rebase them to their own airbase (or to another). There's no “end mission” command, other than this.

When assigning missions for air units, you have a choice between four different types of “mission areas.” Select “province” for specific combat air support missions, or installation strikes, where you know exactly where you want to send your units. If there's a multi-province region where you'd love to hit all those units, you can use the “region” setting, though that potentially dilutes your airstrike effectiveness. Air superiority and intercept missions can be set to a specific “region” (usually not just a province) to protect within that zone. Or they can be set to an “area” (circle) or “cone.”

The “area” is useful for setting a centrepiece which covers all of your units in attack, but don’t set the range too high or else they’ll spend half their time outside of the zone where you want them. “Cones” are very useful for pointing at enemy airbases, where their missions will be coming from. Use intercept if you’re able to see these units in time (using radar, or whatever), or air superiority if you can’t. Keep in mind that, by using the angle, range and width settings, you can turn a “cone” into a semicircle or even wider – basically half of an “area” assignment, which eliminates the disadvantages of using a full circle.

If you select an air unit for a mission, you will see a mixture of shading and colouration superimposed over the map. This shows you what the selected air unit’s range is, which means which targets it can hit. This will also be a good guide to where you may face shortages of airbases, which you can correct if you have enough time.

If you find that a certain air unit does not have quite enough range to hit a certain target, look at the composition of your unit. If you have two tactical bombers, and a multi-role airwing combined into the same air unit, you could reorganise it and see if the tac bombers have the range to get there by themselves. Then you can send the MR unit somewhere else.

It’s possible to set your message settings to advise you when an air wing has made its strike, and what its results were. You can check the target, see how it’s been damaged, and decide whether to keep those airstrikes going, or switch the unit to another target. On the other hand, you may not want to be bothered by constant reports of air missions. If you consider these reports distracting “spam,” then turn them off, and simply remember to cycle through your air units periodically using the Outliner. Unless your memory is really good, you may waste some airstrikes on targets that are already destroyed, but at least you won’t have to deal with all those popups.

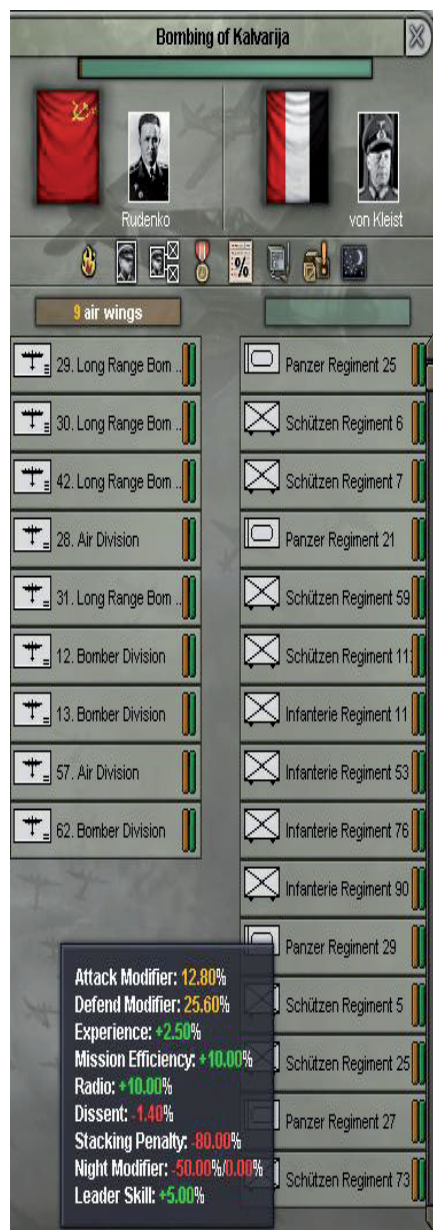
Keep in mind that, when setting zones of action, the planes must be spread out to cover the area you give them. The larger the area, the less able they will be able to thoroughly cover the whole area.

Let your air units rest if they start to lose too much organisation, or if they need to rebuild strength. Move them to a rear area, if you need to, so they won’t face unexpected combat. This is where the “reserve” air mission is useful, if you have enough units to manage it. This mission will automatically swap out units in need of rest, replacing them with fresh units from your reserve unit.

I don’t generally recommend using aircraft to attack at night, because of the penalties if you don’t have appropriate technology for night operations, but if you have just one main target, and enough airwings that you would otherwise have a serious stacking penalty, set some of your airwings to attack during the day, and the rest to attack at night. The ones attacking at night have a penalty that won’t be much more than the stacking penalty if they’d joined during the day, but the planes that attack during the day **avoid** the stacking penalty, and their attacks are made more effective.

Air units can be assigned as reserve airwings. This allows them to take the place of well-worn units that have been in operation for a while, keeping them from running themselves completely ragged. Obviously, this dilutes your regular level of airpower – it’s a tradeoff you must decide, between short-term and long-term benefit.

Radio technology which increases range is something that not only extends the range of your HQs, but it also aids your air units, which need to keep in touch with their own base.



That’s an impressive amount of airpower – the equivalent of 900 strategic bombers! Too bad their effectiveness is limited by the stacking penalty, so that the combat effect is the same as barely 100 bombers (one airwing) by themselves. Two or three airwings would have been a better choice – then they could hit 3 or 4 provinces with better total effect in each.

AVOIDING STACKING PENALTIES

Especially if you find two of your formations joined into the same combat – such as your interceptors responding to an attack upon your bombers – the added number of planes may combine to ruin all of your planes combat effectiveness. The solution would be to remove the least effective airwings from the fight. Hopefully, your bombers, for instance, have done much of what they came for, and you can leave the fighters to battle between themselves by retreating your bombers back to base. Remember to give them new orders, after breaking off combat.

PROTECTING YOUR AIR ASSETS

It's always a really good idea to send fighters to protect your bombers, whether they're combined into the same air unit or sent alongside. But if the enemy isn't opposing your bombers, get the fighters out of there and give them something better to do. Otherwise, they will contribute to a stacking penalty, and make the bombings less effective. Using the Air Intercept order may be preferable, since they will only "come when called." But make sure their airbase is near enough they can respond before it's too late.

After naval or air combat is complete, you should always doublecheck your units to make sure they are not badly damaged. If they are, you should take steps to preserve and protect them, if you can at all afford to do so.

If you need to send air units to a rear-area airbase, you should consider doing that. If your local airbase is secure (i.e. not being bombed often), you could just let them sit there and rest, regaining organisation and strength. Remember that air units' ability to repair and reinforce is dependent on its level. If more units at a base are in urgent need of reinforcement and repair than the level of the airbase, they will not get the help they need until after others are repaired. In this case, if you have other airbases with capacity you should send them there.

Unless their assigned to an intercept mission, planes at your bases will not respond to an attacking enemy – this is where they can catch you and destroy you on the ground. Have some units, at least, set to intercept so this doesn't happen without opposition.

MISSIONS

When you're employing airpower against enemy troops, attacks upon larger stacks will have the most overall impact – you will kill more of the enemy, and reduce his strength more – but you may have a more **significant** impact against a single unit or a smaller stack that's in combat, because your reduction of enemy strength in a smaller battle may equal a larger percentage of the whole. That is, you will be more likely to cause the enemy to shatter and run, which may be a more important goal, even though you kill fewer enemy troops.

Would it be better to hit infrastructure next to the capital, or next to the units you're trying to place out of supply? Hitting next to the units allows you to select the units affected, whereas hitting near the capital simply allows random units to go out of supply. On the other hand, hitting provinces near the capital may have a longer-lasting and more far-reaching effect. Determine your tactics depending on what you most need.

Systematic bombing of enemy airfields may give you a reprieve from constant air attack, but you will have to keep it up over time to overcome the repair rate which makes these airfields operational again quickly. The strategy cannot be to completely destroy the enemy's ability to base his units, which technically is not possible, but instead to make it impossible for the enemy to repair his units because his airbases lack the capacity (because they've been bombed to levels lower than the number of aircraft they must support).

Don't put too much effort into destroying runways if you're about to conquer the province it's in. You might find that undestroyed airfield very useful! Generally, judge how quickly the airfield is repairing damage, and estimate how long before you might capture it. You don't have to have a fully operational runway, but at least one undamaged level will be most useful to you.

Because runway cratering missions (and others, perhaps) may accomplish everything you need very quickly (within 2-3 strikes), you should consider launching individual raids, not using the "continuous" checkbox. It's all reliant upon how much you can remember, and how much micromanagement you're willing to do.

On the other hand, remember that airbases are repairable, and so even a destroyed airbase may still be able to operate again within several hours' time. Take this into consideration before sending your units on a suicide mission. It may not matter at all in the whole calculation, but you should consider your options.

Even with concentrated air attacks, it is unlikely that airpower alone can completely destroy a land unit, or even cause it to retreat, unless the attacks are combined with an underway ground attack. However, it's certainly possible to use airpower "soften up" the enemy units before an attack. It's also a lot more useful if the enemy is having manpower shortages or if they're out of supply, because in those cases any damage you inflict is more likely to remain permanent.

If the enemy has a "salient" into your line (a pocket of troops that bulges out from their main line), you can bomb his infrastructure behind the line and cut him off from supply without permanently hurting your ability to get supply as you move forward – your supplies just travel around the bombed-out area, whereas his supplies have no choice but to go through the narrow passageway because your units cut off supply from any other direction. In most other cases, you must balance your immediate need to cut the enemy off from his supplies against your future need to use those same provinces to support your offensive into his territory.

Patrols over the sea may uncover attempted invasions, or targets of opportunity. When you need to use naval bombers or other air units to patrol over the ocean, you can set them to air superiority mission (not intercept) and they will fly at that location until redirected by you or forced to return. Yes, use air superiority even for bombers if they're flying patrol – setting them to naval strike will send them there, and they'll come back right away if they don't find anything. On the other hand, if you want your naval bombers to bomb anything they find, then you may prefer to send them on naval strike missions – this just may require more micromanagement. Be sure not to leave any airwings "hanging" on patrol, in case you need them for other duties, or they don't automatically return.

Setting fighters and interceptors to fighter missions depends on what you want to do. If you'd rather not spend fuel and waste organisation flying constant missions, you can set them to air intercept. They will arrive soon after enemy units are detected (though not right away – keep this in mind if the range is distant, or if you want immediate action). However, you must be able to detect the enemy first, and so air intercept does not work over enemy territory unless you have radar covering that area.

Air superiority sends your aircraft on "fighter sweeps," looking for enemy fighters or bombers. This is often ordered over enemy territory, but doesn't have to be. Air superiority missions fly constantly (depending on your night/day orders), and so can run into enemy air units that weren't previously spotted. But this also means they fly a pattern across whatever region (or cone, or area, etc.) you assign them to. If they're on the far end of their patrol pattern, and your enemy flies a mission where they just were, they may not be able to come back in time to catch them. Each mission has certain limitations, as noted.



Use Logistics Bombing mostly to cut off or reduce supply lines (in crowded areas, reducing may be enough). Bomb green provinces (using supply mapmode), forcing supply to go through lower infrastructure provinces, as seen (the strategic bomber over the green province near the Baltic). Notice there's a fleet there, also, to block any attempted supply by sea (note that they'll need to be assigned to convoy raiding in order to accomplish such a blockade). The presence of the lake geography helps.

Paratroops (Paradrop mission) sometimes are your only way to access some territory, especially if the option of amphibious invasion is blocked by enemy naval superiority.

Strategic bombers are most useful if IC or whatever is concentrated in certain provinces. If the IC is more dispersed, you'll have to pay more attention to re-assigning your missions (or turn it over to an HQ). Strategic bombers are your primary way of affecting enemy IC and resource production without having to conquer territory.

WHERE AND WHEN TO USE AIRPOWER

Air Units need to concentrate on your most important battles – the ones you either need to win most, or the ones you need to win quickly (which is an important, and sometimes overlooked point). Sometimes there will be battles which are not necessarily the most important, but it would be very beneficial for your strategy, or for getting troops to where you want them, if you could win the battle quickly. For instance, a battle against slim resistance, rated at maybe 94% in your favor, may briefly become more important than a fierce, massive battle nearby, because once your armies win the 94% battle they can move forward, join the massive battle and tip the scales. Therefore, it would become more important to concentrate your airpower on the smaller battle with good odds in order to bring it to a successful conclusion quickly, which frees up your divisions for more important work elsewhere. This will always be a judgment call – there's no

hard and fast rule. Learn what works, in which situations.

Set mission goals for yourself in air combat, but if it doesn't work out as expected consider whether the goal is worth pursuing or not. For instance, if it's your intent to destroy an island's airbases and naval base to keep them from being used to oppose your invasion, think about whether it's best to give up and try something else or if it's worth continuing the mission for a longer period. Determination can accomplish seemingly impossible goals, but don't let determination turn into stubbornness, which can be counterproductive.

On that subject, do you really want to attack the enemy naval base on that shoreline you're invading? Even if it's not the port you're invading, the base could potentially be more important to you, as a base of supply once you capture it, than it would be for the enemy in the intervening time. All in all, since it does not prevent use, only usefulness, reducing a naval base is not very impactful in harming enemy strategy except on the long term. Your efforts would be better directed against enemy ships, unless they're sheltering in the port and the only way you can get to them is to attack it.

THE IMPORTANCE OF AIR SUPERIORITY

Having "air superiority" (the condition, not the mission, though the mission is how you accomplish the condition) is important for the safe conclusion of other important air strategies. In fact, if you cannot establish

air superiority, you may not be able to use your airpower in other ways. Air superiority involves reducing the enemy fighter (and interceptor) air strength so seriously that he cannot effectively oppose your bombing missions. Your losses in terms of tactical, strategic or ground support aircraft may be directly proportional to the degree to which you can silence enemy fighters. This may be achieved through a combination of fighter vs. fighter victories and runway cratering missions.

If you lack air superiority, you may have to avoid the most important battles because the enemy may have too much airpower there to contest you. Remember, your most important, “must-win” battles are usually the enemy’s most important battles too, where they will concentrate their airpower. In these cases, you will want to send your airpower to other important battles where the enemy is not concentrating airpower. You’ll have to “sneak in” to avoid enemy fighters, and hope to get away before they can respond to your presence.

Remember also that you can have “regional air superiority” if you can’t manage total superiority. Either you or the enemy may shift fighters into an area where they haven’t been previously, and one side may have superior numbers in that area, even though the other side has more overall. Countries with less airpower may be able to seize air superiority over a portion of the front using this tactic, which will continue to work until the enemy responds by moving their own airpower. Obviously, shifting units out of one area into another leaves the former area open and more vulnerable. But air superiority leaves the “underdog” in such a bad position anyway that you would probably be best advised to move your units rather than enter combat at a disadvantage. Otherwise, you may just be squandering your units in combats they cannot win.

CHOOSE YOUR BATTLES

You must use judgment as to when to fight, when to retreat, when to attack, etc. This concept is especially important with airpower. Ships sometimes have a chance to succeed even though they’re outnumbered. Land units, in many circumstances, may have the ability to defend against vastly superior numbers, and sometimes even a sacrificial defense will benefit your country’s overall strategy. None of this holds true for airpower. In almost every circumstance, you will lose airpower in combat with superior numbers of the enemy unless you have a serious technological advantage over them. Why squander what little airpower you have in hopeless battles where your planes will just be destroyed?

Sometimes a valid answer to the question above is that you have nothing to lose. If your air units are so outnumbered they cannot survive, and airbases will be bombed out of existence and you’ll have nowhere to land, there’s little sense in “preserving” your air units rather than sending them into hopeless battles, hoping they might do some good. If you have a hope of rebuilding, or finding a good defensive line where the enemy can be held or turned back, you may need those air units later. You can use them to gain regional air superiority, or to make pinprick attacks along areas of the front where they still might do some good. You won’t have this option if you’ve already lost your planes.

This can’t be repeated enough – when things look desperate, there’s a temptation to send all the airpower you have to try to help out. But if you have too many airwings in one combat, the stacking penalty will kill your effectiveness, and it will be worse than if you only had half the planes you have.

CARRIER AIR GROUPS (CAGS)

CAGs are a special type of air unit which is considered to be a mixture of all specialties – fighters, bombers, naval strike, etc. They have quite a capability, but only relative to the proportion of each type, so that a CAG might be able to bomb, but might be only 1/2 or 1/3 as effective as a similar-sized land-based unit. This is reflected in their unit stats, but it’s important to keep in mind so you don’t wonder why technology doesn’t improve their stats as quickly as for land-based units.

A CAG also has the unique ability to use carriers, which means they have a moveable base which can approach the enemy and then flee. This can be quite useful if you know how to use it. It’s always best to approach during cover of darkness, so it limits the carrier’s vulnerability as it approaches, but allows the CAG to attack during the day.

Remember a CAG can operate from a land airbase as easily as from a carrier. Also, remember CAGs produce separately from the carriers in the production queue. In fact, it might not take as long to produce. You can either deploy the CAG to a land airbase until the carrier is ready, then rebase it. Or you could choose to delay production of the CAG by leaving it unfunded at the end of your queue.

PROCESS OF AIR COMBAT

As with land combat, your goal is to have a higher combined total of modified air attack (anti-air) values that are higher than the combined total of modified air defense values of the enemy. These may not be apparent in the interface, so you may just have to try combat with various enemy aircraft types and remember how each type fares against you.

Keep in mind that, as with land combat, the units’ relative effectiveness may greatly modify their relative ability to fight each other. A completely inferior air unit, for instance, may have an advantage because of its effectiveness, whether this is because of stacking penalties, or whatever.

Don’t stick around long enough to seriously deplete your combat strength. You spent a lot of hard earned money on these planes – if your enemy destroys a whole airwing in combat, you’ve permanently lost an important part of your warmaking ability.



RULING THE WAVES

“The island of Oahu, with its military depots, both naval and land, its airdromes, water supplies, the city of Honolulu with its wharves and supply points, forms an easy compact and convenient object for air attack... I believe therefore, that should Japan decide upon the reduction and seizure of the Hawaiian Islands... the attack will be launched on Ford's Island at 7.30 a.m.”

– Prediction by Brig. Gen. William Mitchell, published in a memorandum for the U.S. Army Chief of Staff in 1924.

NAVAL BASES

As with airbases, naval bases can only repair a number of ships, allowing them to regain strength and organisation, up to the level of the base. If your fleet has taken serious damage, send them to the nearest naval base with capacity to help, regardless of where their home base is. If the fleet needs to stay where it is, you can detach only those ships in need of repair, perhaps with an escort of one or two ships to protect it from attack on the way.

Only the first level of any base (air or naval) may be purchased in the production interface. Any improvements upon that initial base must be ordered through the province interface.

WATCHING YOUR COASTLINES

By definition, any country which has a navy also has a coastline to defend.

Be mindful of when you need to move your navy out of port in order to protect your shores. You don't want to be surprised by an enemy landing force inside your country. Sometimes, it's necessary and practical to have your navy patrolling your shores at all times. However, some countries either lack the numbers to do this, or the staying power to avoid getting them sunk before the enemy even starts to mount an invasion.

Submarines and destroyers can be used as pickets to watch for enemy fleets. The advantage of using submarines for this is that they may have an opportunity to strike the first blow against this enemy fleet, even as it's warning you that it's there. If you mean to use this tactic, make sure your message settings will alert you when a fleet goes into combat.

Even aircraft on patrol can warn you of an approaching enemy fleet – have **something** out there!

FLEET COMPOSITION

This Strategy Guide will have a supplement, published closer to the time of release, and containing information that is not completely available before release because the game will not be 100% balanced until then. This supplement will contain more details on how ships and fleets actually

perform in combat, and therefore how they are best used.

HOI 2 players devised a “cruizerg” strategy which made use of peculiarities within the game to overwhelm the enemy. It remains to be seen whether a similar strategy will either work, or be necessary in HOI 3. The supplement will address this.

Fleets should always have at least as many “screens” (destroyers and light cruisers) as capital ships and other vessels like carriers and transports that need to be protected.

If you're used to HOI 2, where aircraft carriers had their CAGs integrated into their unit, don't make the mistake of thinking a carrier can defend itself even a little. Always have a good number of screens around to keep distance between the carrier and any attacker, and always have some heavier firepower to ward off heavier enemies.

SPECIALISED TASK FORCES

You can specialize task forces. Some possibilities are listed here, though you may come up with your own:

- **Carrier Strike Force** – A carrier (obviously) or several, as many screens as you can spare, plus ideally a number of capital ships to fight off enemy capitals who might encounter you. If you lack capital ships, at least try to find some light cruisers, which will have better staying power than destroyer flotillas.
- **Battle Task Force** – A balanced number of capital ships and screens, preferably all of approximately matching speeds. If you have a variety of speeds between your capital ships, divide them by speed into different task forces. This fleet can be used for protection of assets, patrol of choke points, or as an aggressive force meant to seek out the enemy in his home waters.
- **Screening/Scouting Force** – A fleet made up primarily of destroyer flotillas or submarine subrons, with perhaps a light cruiser in the mix. This task force's purpose is to find the enemy, or warn of their approach. Pay attention to relative speeds of the different units – faster is better.

- **ASW Task Force** – Like the Screening Force, except without the submarines. Light cruisers and destroyers are the only ships effective at anti-submarine warfare. Use these either as screens (as above), or as “hunter-killer” groups, which go out and seek enemy submarines. These might be effectively used assigned as escorts along convoy routes. An alternative composition might include a light aircraft carrier, though this may be risky.
- **Invasion Force** – An escorted fleet of transport ships (presumably carrying troops), along with destroyers and light cruisers to screen. Since this is a high-value force, it’s best to have some capital ships along to ward off enemy capitals. Either add another fleet of capitals to travel alongside, or include more capital ships in order to provide shore bombardment. A second fleet, sent along the same route, is more useful, because then it can be detached to screen on either side. Make sure to keep some heavy units with your main force, or else it might be surprised.

When you have high value fleets in operation, which must get through to their targets, it’s best to have long-range screens, in addition to the screens within each fleet. The “screening/scouting force” mentioned above and/or a battle task force, or even a carrier strike force, may be sent ahead of the “must arrive” fleet in order to intercept potential enemy attempts to sink them. Send them ahead of the fleet you’re protecting, and perhaps even to each side also. This depends, obviously, on how many ships you have to work with.

Any of the first four types of fleet noted above could be sent along a convoy route as a means of clearing the route of enemy surface raiders. Clearing a route of submarines would require an ASW task force.

CHOKEPOINTS

Naval units are often most effective when they’re placed at “choke points” where enemy fleets and convoys must pass, or along known shipping routes where you’re likely to meet the enemy. Most ships – even yours – will generally follow an obvious route when you set their destination. This route is relatively predictable, and this foreknowledge can help you intercept enemy fleets and convoys. You’ll find these concentrations along the tips of continents – like the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan – as well as at choke points like the Strait of Malacca where you’re likely to run into any fleet ordered from the Pacific Ocean toward India. There are other routes, certainly, but is the enemy likely to go to the trouble to take the long way around? Often not, especially if you’re fighting the AI.

This strategy can be used in reverse, to protect your own fleets from attack. The AI, and even human opponents, will send their fleets to hunt for you in obvious places. If you intentionally select routes which do not pass these choke points or obvious shipping routes, you’re likely to be able to slip past the enemy altogether. This is complicated somewhat by the “patrol” assignment, which sends a fleet to an area, where it wanders around. But by using the advanced movement orders (shift-rightclick) you can choose a route carefully calculated to avoid the enemy patrols.

CONVOY RAIDING

Use the aforementioned chokepoints as the focus of your convoy raiding. If there’s more than one chokepoint the enemy convoys can use, try to cover them all. But the laws of physics dictate that ships cannot travel

across islands, and so geography dictates that convoys must come through these passages.

To prevent their being detected and possibly destroyed, your best bet is to keep your submarines and surface raiders away from enemy airbases and naval bases. There is a detection range which makes it more likely for units to be spotted near these installations.

Convoy raiders follow a certain method of operation. They will want to avoid enemy naval units, while at the same time seeking enemy convoys. This often requires a bit of “sneakiness.” Select routes which cannot easily be predicted by the enemy. Approach choke points, but you may not want to actually go into these possibly protected seazones. Be unpredictable. The enemy may have a hunter-killer group looking for you.

Composition varies – it could include a couple of capital ships operating together for strength, or multiple capital ships operating independently in order to maximize fear and disruption, and lessen the chance of all the raiders being found and engaged. However, even light cruisers, destroyer flotillas or (obviously) submarines can be used for these missions.

PROCESS OF NAVAL COMBAT

As in land and naval combat, your goal is to have a higher Sea Defense value than the targeting ships have in Sea Attack values. The more your numbers outnumber his, the better your chances of not taking damage.

Naval critical hits can take ships down lots faster than normal combat, which means you can never predict with certainty that a superior force will come away the victor. Of course you will have difficulty taking on an overwhelming force for the reasons cited in the previous paragraph. But small or even medium disadvantages may sometimes be overcome by luck. Critical hits occur about 5 or 10 percent of the time, and dramatically increase the damage done by the hit.

HELPING YOURSELF TO VICTORY

Testing has seemed to indicate that your commander’s skill has a strong bearing on the advantages which determine success in battle. You would be wise to make sure you have commanders both, with high skill levels, and the grade/rank capacity to command all the ships in your fleet. If your fleet is likely to be combined with another in some naval action, you’ll want one of those fleets to have a commander capable of handling all of the ships involved.

Two of the things apparently affected by leader skill is initial distance (positioning) in combat, which is a key factor, and targeting, which is another key factor which helps determine effectiveness in combat.

Weather conditions in the seazone also have an important impact upon positioning, distance and targeting.

THE “RENSSLAER PARADIGM”

In my Victoria Story/After Action Report, “Fire Warms the Northern Lands,” I developed and used a naval strategy which allowed me to gradually turn a serious deficit in numbers of capital ships into an advantage. It was adopted by some players as a standard, and the strategy should work in any Paradox game.

The plan is to attack with multiple ships, so the chances of either a critical hit or the effect of combined firepower are made much higher, even though the overall fleet composition is inferior to what they will face in battle. Alternatively, find battles where you have “regional naval

supremacy” – where your ships outnumber the enemy’s in that seazone, even if the enemy outnumbers you globally.

If the enemy starts to inflict serious damage on your fleet, retreat so as to avoid losing any ships. Preserve them, repair them, then send them out again. If you do achieve a lucky hit against one of the enemy capital ships, even if you’re taking serious damage yourself, hang on like a junkyard dog so long as it appears he will suffer the first loss. As soon as his capital ship sinks, disengage so you don’t lose your own ships. If you’re doing better than expected, you can stick around to try to sink a second capital ship. On the whole, this achieves a combat loss for his side which is greater than your own.

The key is to wait until you get a lucky break, and to press your advantage when you do. Repeated applications of this can wear down even a vastly superior enemy through the gradual attrition of small engagements.

AFTER BATTLE

Once you’ve won a naval engagement, you should make every effort to pursue the enemy fleet and win a decisive victory if you have the strength to do so. Sometimes, other mission priorities may prevent you from doing this. Don’t leave a critical fleet, like an invasion fleet, or a carrier, in danger because you want to go “haring off” after a good target.

Since the primary goal of a fleet is to sink the enemy, your best bet is to follow the enemy after your victory. If you won the first round, you’re likely to beat him again if you encounter him where he’s fleeing, and your chances are reasonably good of sinking a crippled enemy ship. Decisiveness is the watchword – pursue them until they sink, or else they’ll come back later and fight you at full strength.

CONVOY MANAGEMENT

If you set your “auto convoys” on, the computer will set up all your trade and supply convoys automatically, trying to meet the transport need for all the resources you have access to, all the trade deals you agree to, and all the supplies which units away from the homeland need. If you lack enough convoy ships to meet this total need, some of your convoys will be coloured red in the production screen, rather than green, indicating they are “inefficient.”

If you want to manage your own convoys, there is a “create convoy” button, and you can arrange for everything but the trade convoys, which will still need to be automatic. However, this is not a necessary manual process – your best bet is to leave the convoys to automatic, and make adjustments if you see a need to.

Convoy efficiency is a measure of what percentage of the needed resources are able to be shipped. This could be impacted either by the supply of resources or the supply of transports needed for convoys. If convoy raiding losses have reduced the number of convoy ships assigned, and there’s nothing left in the pool to replace them, the goods are just not going to go through. These inefficient convoys will show up as red. If the number before the slash (“/”) matches the one after, the convoy is idle because there’s nothing to ship.

Even if you’re at peace, it might be nice to have some convoy escorts around before war starts, in case of unexpected declarations. You’ll have to wait until you’re at war to assign escorts to a convoy route. Escorts will sit in a pool until then. If you lack escorts, it can be helpful to assign regular navy ships to escort duty, as cruisers, battleships and aircraft carriers can

provide at least some assistance, as can regular destroyer flotillas. Only light cruisers and destroyers will be effective against submarines, but surface raiders will be wise to avoid a battleship.

Convoy routes that are experiencing raids from submarines or surface raiders will change their route, hoping to avoid the enemy. This may only make the enemy’s job more difficult, but at least you will not be a predictable target.

DECISIVE BATTLES

For many years, fleet admirals dreamed of bringing their battlegroup fleets (their battleships and battlecruisers) into a “decisive engagement” with the enemy fleet, much like the Battle of Jutland from World War I, where the opposing main battle fleets met and fought. This was the basis of War Plan Orange – a 1930s strategy meant by the US Navy to destroy the Japanese fleet in case of war. The Japanese had a large contingent of admirals who thought the same would bring victory for Japan.

Later, once the value and potential of aircraft carriers was explored, the same was thought of carrier battles – victory would come through a decisive engagement.

In HOI3, it is possible that a meeting of two opposing main fleets could provide a significant victory for either side, especially in the early years of the game, before aircraft carriers become available in large numbers, and take over as the dominant force.

So, too, can you have decisive carrier battles. In fact, the Japanese tried and failed to have just such a decisive engagement at in the Coral Sea, and the survival of key US carriers from that battle played a large part in the decisive victory the US achieved at the Battle of Midway. After that point, the Imperial Japanese Navy was never the same again, and largely lacked the capability to make decisive moves of its own.

Wars of attrition may be fought on the high seas, and may actually result in victory. But you, as a player, will find it much more useful to pursue decisive battles on the high seas.



“In landing operations, retreat is impossible, to surrender is as ignoble as it is foolish. Above all else remember that we as attackers have the initiative, we know exactly what we are going to do, while the enemy is ignorant of our intentions and can only parry our blows. We must retain this tremendous advantage by always attacking rapidly, ruthlessly, viciously, and without rest.”

– Lt. Gen. George S. Patton, Jr., orders to the 7th Army before landing in Sicily, 27 June, 1943

You might think, now that invasion forces aren't specifically limited to invading beach provinces, that you have free rein and can put your troops ashore anywhere. Technically, this is true, and yet entirely beside the point. You are basically limited to landing supportable invasions against ports. Otherwise, your troops will be stuck where they are, and cannot effectively move beyond where they landed. There are some minor exceptions to this rule, which we'll discuss.

NAVAL BASES

If you've planned ahead, and constructed a one point naval base, ready to deploy, you can place it as soon as your troops have won the battle and captured the coastal province. This will provide a small amount of supply to whatever units you've landed there. This is all you get until you capture a larger port – the next level of naval base cannot begin production until the first one is complete, so it may take up to five years to finish building a Naval Base from nothing up to its maximum level.

Any temporary invasion port which is set up will be vulnerable to enemy air attack, and so before anyone invades, they will need to have bombed enemy airfields, and will need to maintain a large degree of air superiority over the beachhead, or else the base will be bombed and the units relying upon it for supply will start to wonder if the invasion was such a good idea in the first place.

DEFENDING & INVADING SMALL ISLANDS

Island defenses, if possible, should include coastal fortresses. If that's not possible, then try to get as many units dug in on the island as possible before the enemy comes. Engineering brigades will help in this respect. Otherwise, units with the highest defensiveness will be good, because an amphibious invasion will face some pretty serious negative combat modifiers. The harder you are to “hit” the more likely your units will be able to hold out.

If you're on the other side of the coin, and you're attacking an island,

your best bet is to use marine brigades (preferably whole divisions of marines, maybe with some engineers). Small, one-province islands are always going to have an amphibious attack penalty, no matter who's attacking. The less the penalty is for the types of units you're using, the more likely your attack will succeed.

Obviously, there's no sense in building a more expensive “land” fortress on an island. Any coastal fortress will cover all approaches.

AMPHIBIOUS INVASIONS

If you are conquering enemy territory, you'll need to mount an amphibious invasion. If you can invade an enemy naval base, so much the better. The transport can then dock and you can load up again for your next assault. If you've landed away from a naval base, your units will have to rely on their 30-day reserve supplies to move around once they've landed away from a naval base. If they can't reach one before then, they're in trouble. Remember to ensure these units have been fully supplied for a while beforehand, or else you may be surprised to find they have less than a 30-day reserve!

You must plan ahead for amphibious invasions, because they're complicated ventures.

Mounting an amphibious invasion requires transports loaded with troops, preferably with escorting ships to keep them from being intercepted and sunk. The invasion itself is a naval mission given to the fleet after selecting the land province which it's targeting. Keep heavy surface ships around to provide shore bombardment.

If the troops are landing against opposition (you can check this by scouting with ships before the invasion arrives), they will face varying degrees of negative modifiers to attack values for every unit except marines. If you find they were directed toward a province where an enemy unit is, you can always call them off and redirect them to an undefended province, if another practical target exists.

It's wise to avoid opposed amphibious invasions at night, which

could be disastrous, because your combat modifiers are already severely reduced. Use the calendar and clock on the Naval Orders Interface to decide what time the invasion should begin.

Don't invade near a large enemy force which can quickly respond to your invasion. Remember, if you land adjacent to the enemy, he can immediately pin you so you can't move.

When you're invading, it is critically important that you capture a port on your targeted land mass first. If, for instance, you want the oil province in Sarawak (near Brunei) in Borneo, you will first need to capture the port just a few provinces to the southeast along the coast. Otherwise, your amphibious invasion have captured an oilfield you can do nothing with! You can't ship those resources out without a Naval Base. Moreover, your unit will be stuck there, because you have no way of landing supplies for it. Its only source for supplies must be the nearby Naval Base.

SUPPLY TO BEACHHEADS

Before any invasion, look to your logistics plan. Capturing a Naval Base does no good if you do not have the convoy ships to transport supplies there, or if those convoys will be unable to reach the port because you lack local naval superiority. Lacking one or both of these needs, it is still possible to manage in dire circumstances, but it will be very difficult and frustratingly inefficient.

The rules allow you to deploy a level one Naval Base to a province which you have just captured. Have one produced and on standby, ready to deploy, if you're expecting to mount an invasion into a province which doesn't already have a Naval Base. Keep in mind, though, that's a very tentative lifeline! You're only going to be able to supply a small force through that port, and the rest will be using up their 30-day reserve until you can find or capture another means of supply.

JUNGLE WARFARE & MOVEMENT

Trying to conquer a jungle takes real patience. Either you must move overland, once you've secured your supply line, or you must use transport ships to mount amphibious invasions. But in order to maintain a supply line as you advance, you must take each province in sequential order – if you don't, you will be out of supply again. To add to the frustration, the transports can't pick you up again until you get back to the port!

“When playing Japan it's a good idea to create some Corps HQs and attach your divisions to them rather than keeping the historical divisions attached directly to armies setup they start with.”

– David Ballantyne (Darkrenown), Paisley, Scotland

ISLAND HOPPING

While the United States' strategy in the beginning of the Pacific War was intended to re-take territory that had been lost to Japan, it was eventually decided it would be more useful to either destroy bases that Japan could use to fight against the Allies, or to capture key islands which could provide bases for the Allied war against Japan.

It is critically important to keep the range of land-based airpower in mind as you venture into enemy-held seas. Concentrated airpower has the potential to sink ships, and even fleets, that come too near. Aircraft carriers are a problem, too, and are perhaps even more dangerous. But land-based airpower is something you can know how to avoid, because you know where their airbases are. Each airbase has a range, which you

will be able to figure out by hit or miss, if you can't tell exactly. Be wary of these threats to your fleets.

But it is also important to capture bases where you can place land-based bombers which can patrol and strike against enemy fleets, as well as enemy land-bases and ground forces within their range. You can also base strategic bombers on islands, which may have the range to hit enemy industrial centres.

Land-based fighters are important, of course, to protect these bases. You may have to settle for re-basing CAGs at these bases until your fighters have the range to actually rebase to these island locations.

These strategies are most important in the Pacific Ocean, but actually remain important in any theatre. The bases the Allied acquired in North Africa in 1942 and 1943 played a huge role in the invasion of Italy and the eventual defeat of Germany.



“Every possible means, both normal and abnormal, must be devoted to putting the U-boat arm in a state which will enable it to fulfill its primary function, namely the military defeat of Britain.”

– From a recommendation provided by Kommodore Karl Dönitz, commander of German U-Boat forces, September 1939.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Pushing armies and navies across a map is all well and fine, but unless you actually make progress in destroying either the enemy's ability or will to fight, you have accomplished nothing. This is where strategic warfare and strategic planning comes in.

There is a balance present at all times in the game – who (which faction) has the most resources, industry and military power at its disposal? Most of the chapters you've read have dealt with defeating the enemy's military. But to finally achieve victory, you will have to defeat the enemy's industrial capacity (IC) so that it can no longer build a military.

This balance is represented roughly as Victory Points. Basically, if your total useable IC is growing faster than your enemy's, you can be seen as winning the war. Eventually, if you continue to build, conquer or repair your own IC faster than the enemy gains his, you are very likely to win at some point, because you can build the bigger armies, bigger air forces and bigger navies that will bring victory.

As you pursue your strategic planning, keep this industrial balance in mind.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

There is a reason why the study of history focuses on “campaigns” – phases of warfare which are geographically separated from each other. We study the “Italian Campaign” and the “Island Hopping Campaign,” or the “Invasion of France.” This is because it's important to set strategic military objectives which are distinct from each other, and achieve them. It's usually necessary to attain these goals one by one.

A campaign is usually limited geographically because once the goal is met, you have achieved some degree of defensible borders. Once you've “narrowed the frontier” you can prevent enemy counterattacks with fewer divisions, or with the same number of divisions deployed in such a way to pose a serious obstacle to the enemy.

After achieving a defensible position, it's possible to rest, or feel more secure, for a short time. After the invasion of Normandy, the Allies eventually came to the Rhine River, and could rest before crossing

because they were relatively secure from a counterattack. Likewise, once all enemy resistance on Guadalcanal was silenced, the Allies could look forward to a period of rest and planning before they undertook the next major phase.

And phases – steps – are important in your strategic planning. The Allied reconquest of Europe required several steps (which may be useful for you to replicate): 1) the invasion of North Africa, which acquired air and naval bases required to invade Sicily, 2) the invasion of Sicily, which allowed bases to invade Italy, 3) the invasion of northern and southern France, which was made possible by the elimination of enemy resistance in the Mediterranean (i.e. the conquest of Italy).

When you're planning your conquests or re-conquests, you must think in terms of what you must ultimately achieve, and then separate that from the various steps which must be accomplished first in order to make your ultimate goal possible.

By doggedly pursuing these military objectives, you will be better able to use your warmaking capacity to achieve final victory.

STRATEGIC WARFARE

Strategic bombing is one of the key ways to impact not just the enemy's industrial capacity (IC) and resources, but also her will to fight. Besides the tangible destruction of industrial targets, strategic bombing impacts your relative strategic warfare score.

Another key way to impact the enemy's industry and strategic warfare score (i.e. will to fight) is through sinking convoys, through convoy raiding, submarine attacks or airplane attacks. These will also lose the resources or supplies being carried by those convoys (or at least the portion you sunk).

Keep in mind that units other than strategic bombers have some strategic bombing value. Tactical bombers, for the most part, carried out the London Blitz (and the bombing of other British industrial and population centres) virtually by themselves.

The amount of assistance your allies provide to you – and its nearness to actual combat – will also affect your score.

An extension upon your strategic bombing ability may come in the

form of rocket bombs, once you develop the appropriate technologies and build the units. These become a form of strategic bomber, and operate in much the same way. In order to develop them, you will first have to have constructed a Rocket Test Platform (at least one), which will allow research to go forward. This is somewhat of an investment, but the higher your level of test platforms, the faster your research and production will go forward.

Atomic and nuclear technologies are much the same – you must construct an atomic reactor (at 75 IC per level!), and then may proceed with research that will allow you to develop a bomb.

Near the very end of the game, you may have been able to successfully research nuclear technologies, and to build an atomic bomb. A-Bombs must be employed smartly. You will have a limited supply, and the effect will be to relatively permanently eliminate certain IC, resources, etc. from the area where you bomb (so make sure you don't want the territory before you do so!). These detonations will have a definite impact on strategic warfare scores, though, and will affect the willingness of the enemy to continue the war.

Strategic warfare score aside, even if you don't make a meaningful impact upon the enemy's will to fight, strategic warfare means destroying the enemy's industry, which may bring her to her knees anyway.



HEARTS OF IRON III

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the effort to reach out to them, make sure they're cared for, and learn
from them! They're real people, and once they're gone, all we will have is
this game and their legacy.

– Sincerely, Ed Hanks (Rensslaer on the Paradox Forum)





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